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The Local State of Housing: Deepening Entrepreneurial Governance and The Place of Politics and Publics

Emma Ormerod

Abstract

Housing is political, and its relation to the local state is undergoing a monumental transition. This research charts the journey of a neighbourhood in Gateshead, North East England through housing regeneration. It focuses on a joint venture partnership that has grown from a mired central state regeneration initiative, Housing Market Renewal. In doing so, it grounds and develops Bob Jessop's (2016) most recent and flexible state theory, to posit the *local state* as an increasingly relevant conceptual and analytical frame through which to reveal contemporary transformations in local governance. Through an in-depth examination of the relations between new and old state actors, local politics and multiple publics, we can see who is governing and who matters.

In positioning housing as central to a contemporary capitalist political economy, housing therefore becomes a key optic through which to understand the deepening of entrepreneurial governance under austerity localism. The local state in Gateshead is reconstructing the housing market and harnessing private finance. It has become a housing developer in its own right through a complex and opaque process of financialization. Despite an entrenched marketized logic, however, the local state is not simply a unified or monolithic structure. It consists of both structures and relations that are in constant struggle as it tentatively negotiates the current and unstable mode of local governance. Seeing the state as a fragmented, malleable and permeable set of relations reveals the various forms of power and sources of pressure within and beyond it.

Through examples of both conflict and consensus building, a local struggle over representation and legitimacy opens up conceptual questions about politics and the political. As the local state moves increasingly away from previous processes of public engagement and actively conceals its role in housing development, this new governing arrangement is dislocating politicians from the publics they represent. The channelling of political power into the hands of new state actors is undoubtedly de-democratising. However, there remains the potential to disrupt, or re-politicise such processes, which can offer hope to the place of politics and publics.

**The Local State of Housing:
Deepening Entrepreneurial Governance and
The Place of Politics and Publics**

Emma Ormerod

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Department of Geography
Durham University

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To Grandad Paddy,

*Who is still one of the brightest people I have ever met, but wasn't given
the same opportunities that he gave me.*

*I am sorry I didn't complete this journey in time for you to see me do it
...but I did it, and you are in it.*

1 Introduction: Seeing the Local State through Housing



Dunsmuir Grove during demolition, March 2016. Source: author

'I loved it there, you know I got married there, had me son there, buried me husband, all me memories are there. I mean I thought I would have been buried from there. I would have loved it if the Council had said we were going to revamp them all so I could have stayed...but they didn't. Obviously there must have been a reason why.'

(Resident, February 2015)

Housing and its relation to the local state is undergoing a monumental transition. Beginning with trying to understand the '*reason why*' a local state are demolishing housing, this research reveals urgent questions about the current changing nature of the local state under austerity, and a particular shift towards housing as an income generator. Understanding such changes in the local state's intervention in housing comes in many ways from a critical reflection of my own professional experience as a town planner, witnessing and working on the regeneration of a neighbourhood in North Eastern England. The research charts the journey of this neighbourhood, Bensham and Saltwell in Gateshead, through housing regeneration. Focusing most recently on a joint venture partnership that has grown from the ashes of a mired central state regeneration programme,

Housing Market Renewal. The regeneration of this neighbourhood is offered as a window through which to reveal the local state as a remodelled ensemble; an advancing and financializing entrepreneur under fiscal retrenchment. In many ways it is not a shrinking local state.

Taking a grounded approach to the research involved an in-depth empirical investigation into the multiple and contested ways the place – in this case specifically through housing – is known, experienced and treated. This has led to the development of a theoretical framework, which can be used to understand the contemporary governance of housing and maybe governing more widely. At the core of this thesis is an argument that we are witnessing a fiscal transformation of the local state. Building on the earlier work of Leitner (1990), Cochrane (1993), Peck (1995) and Peck and Tickell (2002) it is contended that partnership working more than ever forms part of the local state. Developing and grounding the most recent work of Jessop (2016) on state theory, this thesis calls for an increasingly relational and flexible approach to the state. Following Jessop (1990; 2008), the thesis also makes the case for the development of a flexible methodological and conceptual framework within which to understand different spaces, regions, cities and locals. It is argued furthermore that there is an increasing need to (re)conceptualise the local state and that, certainly in the case of Gateshead, housing is key to understanding such changes and conceptualisations. For as we will go on to see housing has long since been a site of struggle as Fredrick Engels charted in ‘The housing Question’ in 1872. Whilst this housing question remains pertinent today, the contemporary local state (which Engels positioned as a solution to the housing question) is advancing new forms of accumulation and capitalist organizations; ones which raise significant questions about local politics, economics, publics and democracy.

There is a differentiated geography to the unfolding changes of housing in the local state which demand attention. Approaching this research through human geography allows critical engagement and dialogue with a number of related disciplines such as housing studies and planning theory. The research strives to

bring practice – not least planning, regeneration and housing - into dialogue with debates on the state through urban, economic and political geography.

1.1 Aims and Research Questions

Through an in-depth empirical investigation of the local governing of housing, this thesis sets out to do three things: firstly it reconceptualises the local state to account for the current mode of governing and actors and relations within it. Secondly it positions housing as central to such changes within the local state, and specifically considers the relations between the housing market, local politics and the public with the local state. Thirdly it investigates what such changes in the mode of governing housing mean for democracy. It asks the following research questions:

1. How does the local state understand and engage with the housing market?
2. What is the place of local politics and democracy within the local state's housing intervention?
3. How does the local state perceive and interact with the public through housing? How does the public perceive the local state and feel towards such changes?

1.2 Centring Housing in political economy

Housing is political, and it always has been (Madden and Marcuse, 2016). However, it is now increasingly bound up with the economy and finance, at various levels (national, international, local and individual) that the preservation of the housing market has become a notable political concern, often contended at the expense of housing need. Drawing on the Marxian distinction, the exchange value of housing is becoming prioritised over its use value (cf Logan and Molotch, 1987; Harvey, 2012). It is in this sense that housing is therefore central to concerns about contemporary political economy, but ought not to be studied in isolation and instead move beyond the oft understanding of housing-as-market

and housing-as-policy (Aalbers and Christophers, 2014). Whilst this is increasingly discussed in relation to macro-economic and central-state relations (Schwartz and Seabrooke, 2009), there is importantly a differentiated local geography to this that demands attention, particularly at a time of austerity, where local governments are tasked to do more with less.

In understanding these changes, it is important to acknowledge how the boundary between public and private housing provision is increasingly (and perhaps deliberately) blurred; business and government are becoming further intertwined (Crouch, 2011). Interest rates are being kept low by the Bank of England to protect both home owners and the wider housing market, whilst the government continues to look to housing as a solution to economic problems through its drive for home ownership and new house building (Dorling, 2014). The private market is therefore propped up through publicly funded subsidies whereby schemes like Help to Buy manipulate the market, endeavouring to stimulate house price growth, whilst the state is schizophrenically concerned with affordable housing. Whilst accounts of rising house prices, affordability and housing shortage are positioned as a housing crisis, a falling housing market is understood equally to be a crisis. Housing is therefore a political minefield, where only the solution of increasing home ownership and house building is being offered.

This thesis explores the increasing grip that politics, or more specifically, the state has over housing; but also the way in which this in itself simultaneously becomes either politicising or *depoliticising*. For housing is a contemporary site of struggle; where the state appears centre stage. It is in this sense that an investigation of housing can therefore reveal the nature of the local state.

Since the Localism Act (2011) permitted local authorities to use their general powers for commercial purposes, there has been a sharp uptake of joint venture partnerships across the country (Reynolds, 2016; Stevens-Hoare, 2014). Such ventures take different forms, but are often held up to be examples of best practice within the housing industry; particularly as a means to cross subsidise

private development and finance with local authority land. This increasingly prevalent solution, which pressurises local authorities to build more houses for private sale as an income generator under austerity is relatively under researched and has various geographical implications. The findings of this thesis are therefore timely in revealing conceptually, methodologically and empirically how such changes are unfolding and the complex and fractured nature of such changes, at a time when it is crucial to do so. Further, such findings will go on to inform both practical and conceptual knowledge.

1.3 Researching This Local: Bensham and Saltwell

Located in Gateshead, North East England, Bensham and Saltwell are defined as separate though adjoining local authority wards but are considered to be one 'neighbourhood' in neighbourhood planning and regeneration terms (GVA Grimley, 2006a: 2011), and importantly by many residents who live there. As Figure 1 shows, Gateshead is located to the south of Newcastle, and Bensham and Saltwell are directly south of Gateshead town centre.

To a large extent, Bensham and Saltwell's original physical landscape remains unchanged from its Victorian development: characterised by dense rows of Victorian and Edwardian terraces, with smaller pockets of later housing in the core, and larger peripheral inter-war and post war developments, as seen in the aerial photograph in Figure 2. However, social and economic transformations surfaced in the wake of significant industrial decline from the 1970s onwards, as the area began to endure escalating levels of unemployment and significant out-migration (Cameron, 2003).

Subsequently the neighbourhood and surrounding areas were the target of a number of regeneration initiatives, which resulted in waves of displacement that will be considered in depth in Chapter Two. A net outcome was that the neighbourhood became a large-scale provider of affordable housing for a numbers of years, until such housing was positioned as problematic; ironically this was precisely as a consequence of such affordability and its concentration.

The housing market was positioned as having failed, and became a target for Housing Market Renewal (HMR), a centrally funded regeneration programme with over £2.2 billion invested nationally between 2002 and 2011. HMR encouraged the local Pathfinders to engage in “radical and sustained action to replace obsolete housing with modern sustainable accommodation, through demolition and new building or refurbishment ... mean[ing] a better mix of homes, and sometimes fewer homes” (ODPM, 2003: 24).

Figure 1: Map showing Bensham and Saltwell within Gateshead
Source: GVA Grimley (2006a)

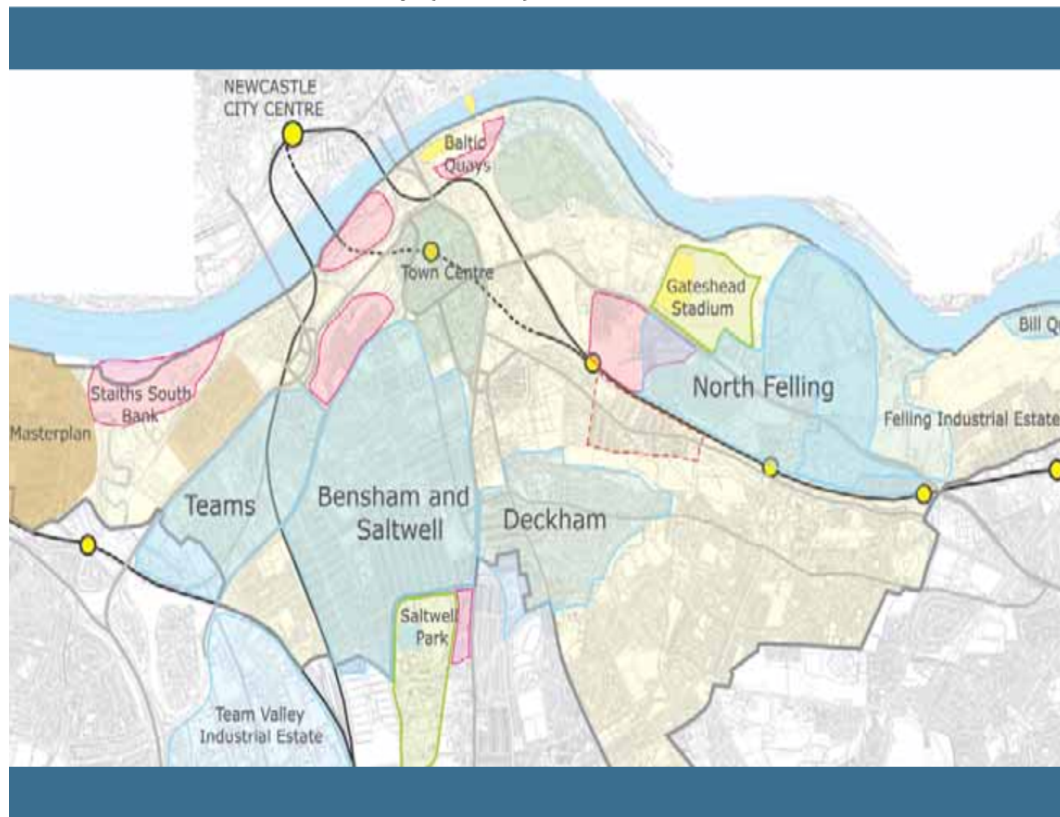
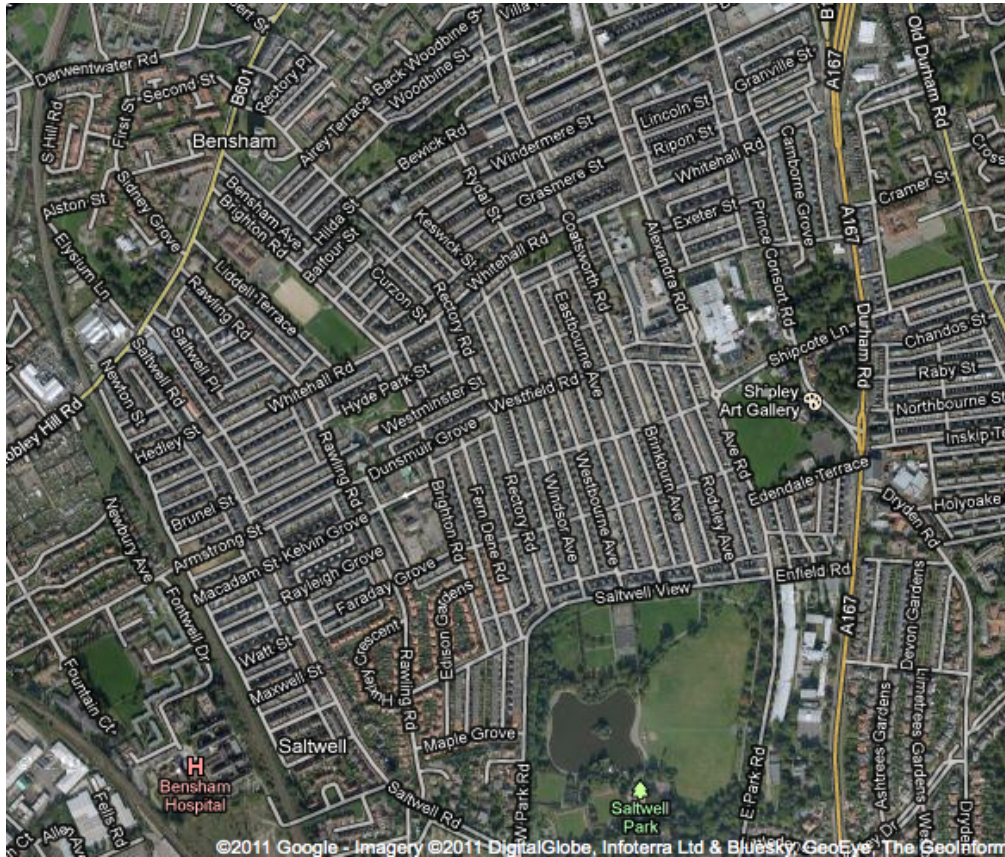


Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing built form of Bensham and Saltwell (2011)

(Source: <https://maps.google.com> (Accessed 4 February, 2014))



A change in government in 2010 saw the premature cessation of HMR, through the withdrawal of central funding, at a time when Gateshead had emptied many streets of their residents, and were part way through demolishing others. The local authority's response was to enter into a joint venture partnership to 'finish the job' of regeneration (NewcastleGateshead, 2011:Evw20). It is the context of this neighbourhood's development and redevelopment and the nature of this partnership, (which stretched beyond this neighbourhood to include nineteen sites for long-term housing development), that make it an important case to investigate. The long term regeneration and recent changes to the governing of housing in this place can reveal the changing nature of and relations within this local state.

1.4 Contributions

In situating housing as central to political economy, and as key to revealing the contemporary nature of the local state, this thesis makes a number of contributions.

1. Firstly in conceptual, analytical and methodological terms, it develops the local state as an increasingly relevant concept and optic through which to reveal contemporary transformations in local governance. In doing so, it argues that there is a need to return to place-based research in order to examine contemporary governing of housing, and governing more widely.
2. Secondly, the thesis contributes to emerging changes to the local state vis-à-vis how housing is increasingly being mobilized to self-fund local authorities. This topic has only recently begun to be researched (Beswick and Penny, 2017) and enables the project to contribute to debates on entrepreneurialism, financialization and neoliberalism.
3. Thirdly, by bringing practice into dialogue with a number of academic debates, a key contribution will be to disseminate findings, and seek to influence future policy. Here, by appreciating the significance of local changes, the thesis makes a number of recommendations.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is made up of eight chapters, of which this introduction is one. Chapter Two provides some context for the case study area of Bensham and Saltwell by charting the historic development and redevelopment of the place alongside larger scale analysis of housing changes, which facilitates the understanding of key questions at the heart of contemporary debates about the role of the (local) state in housing. The chapter revisits Friedrich Engels 1872

‘Housing Question’ and uses its enduring significance to contemporary housing conditions as a way to understand the processes of housing change, but also the difference of contemporary governing of housing. This chapter importantly reveals the cyclical nature of capitalist-state relations and politics which necessitates the ‘sweeping away’ of houses that we continue to see today, placing the centrality of housing in the contemporary capitalist political economy more broadly (Aalbers and Christophers, 2014) through considering the local and place-specific housing conditions.

Chapter Three reviews the relevant literature to establish a theoretical framework for the research. It sets out a (re)conceptualisation of the local state as a way through which to understand the contemporary governing of housing by revisiting and updating early Marxian conceptualisations of the local state and alternative wider state theories. It seeks to develop the most recent moves within the strategic relational approach (SRA) (Jessop, 2008; 2016) which blends several generations of state theories to understand the local state as a fluid and relational ensemble, the relations of which must be understood through in-depth local research that is geographically sensitive and empirically driven.

Chapter Four critically evaluates the methodological approach to the researching this place. It outlines my own journey as a researcher and embeddedness within the research, acknowledging that such a position is subjective and in itself inherently political. The chapter reflects upon the multiple methods used: in-depth interviews, ‘hanging around’, focus groups, archival research and document analysis and the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. Even an in-depth study of local situated knowledge, which draws on a range of methods raises the ethical questions over who has ‘the entitlement, or authority, to represent the lives of particular people to a wider audience’ (Smith, 2010:415).

The empirical Chapters Five, Six and Seven address the key themes of the thesis, and are formulated in accordance with the associated research questions. Chapter Five provides a close examination of the relationship of the local state and the housing market. It does this through examining the use of ‘experts’ and

‘evidence’ in HMR, arguing that an established logic was instrumental in deconstructing the existing housing market. It then goes on to consider how the same logic is reconstructing the housing market through a joint venture partnership, conceptualised as being within the local state. It considers the changing nature of the local state as it becomes increasingly financialized and questions what the future holds for property-based self-financing models.

Chapter Six builds on such changes to the local state to examine the form and function of the local state through existing and emergent social relations (specifically power relations) within and beyond it. It considers the condition of local politics in the neighbourhood, and the place of such politics within the local state. It argues that under the established marketized logic, local political power has been surrendered to ‘experts’ and the subsequent partnership is further re-orientating both the political and institutional roles of governing, by further evacuating local politics from the process. This is understood to be a move towards an increasingly post-democratic era of governing (Crouch, 2004), or certainly one where the spaces of local democracy are being compromised.

Chapter Seven examines where such changes to the local state leave the public: how it perceives and engages with them, and how people feel about this. Through the notion of public interest, and understandings of ‘multiple publics’ (Iveson, 2007; Mahoney et al, 2010) the chapter traces the changing nature of public engagement. In considering the use and constraints of participatory planning and wider community consultation, a clear shift away from such forms of engagement that sought to persuade the public or construct consensus is revealed. Instead the local state is actively concealing its new form and *modus operandi* from the public in order to more smoothly pursue its housing developer aims: at the expense of all publics but importantly some more than others.

Chapter eight draws together and concludes key arguments that have been made in relation to the research questions. It makes reflections on the research and outlines the theoretical, practical and methodological contributions that have been made before opening up avenues for future research.

2 Governing Housing in a Neighbourhood in Transition: Revisiting The Housing Question

‘All aspects of the historic environment change continually: it is impossible to fossilise the past. Present-day needs and aspirations act on what has been left to us from earlier ages to produce a new reality, sometimes subtly blending ancient and modern, sometimes entirely sweeping away buildings and areas that have no part to play in the future. We see these forces at work in Gateshead as the town adjusts to the challenges of the 21st century.’

(Taylor and Lovie 2004:76)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter charts the development and redevelopment of Bensham and Saltwell in order to provide a contextual background to this neighbourhood case study. In doing so it revisits Friedrich Engels’ impassioned arguments in his 1872 pamphlet ‘The Housing Question’ and uses its enduring significance to contemporary housing conditions (both systematic and lived experience) as a way to understand the processes of housing change. Analysing the historic development of this neighbourhood in relation to the wider political economy contextualises the nature of local state intervention and shifting scales (and modes) of governing in housing. Charting the historic development and redevelopment of this particular place since its industrial beginnings is important in revealing the cyclical nature of capitalist-state relations and politics which necessitates the ‘sweeping away’ of houses that we continue to see today. Therefore this chapter positions the centrality of housing in the contemporary capitalist political economy more broadly through considering the local and place-specific housing conditions. Providing this local context alongside larger scale analysis of housing changes facilitates understanding key questions at the heart of contemporary debates about the role of the state (at various scales) in housing, which the thesis more widely goes on to consider. Engels’ ‘Housing Question’ is therefore used to actively understand the present state of housing and earlier moments of crisis (such as that charted by Harvey 2008), it is drawn

upon here in detail, but also throughout the thesis to open up key themes such as the (re)emergence of financialization and the role of the state.

2.2 Revisiting The Housing Question

Friedrich Engels' prescient 'Housing Question' of 1872 was borne out of his observations of the living conditions of working class labourers in Manchester cotton mills some forty years earlier. The *question* was an on-going debate in Western European cities about how to respond to such poor housing conditions of workers. Engels' polemic 'Housing Question' was a series of three articles written in Leipzig Volksstaat, a publication of the German Social Democratic Party, which responds to this debate. It is particularly a retort to the proposed solutions of anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who he calls a 'petty-bourgeois ideologist' and social reformer Emil Sax who he similarly labels a 'bourgeois economist'.

In essence Proudhon and Sax argued for the termination of private renting in favour of home ownership for the working class. Proudhon likened the relationship of renter to house-owner to that of worker to capitalist, and believed abolishing rent in favour of home-ownership would be liberating for the working class. Conversely Engels argued that the relationship was not one and the same; tenancy he believed was a transfer of already existing (previously produced) value and it was therefore a commodity transaction between two citizens. Whilst this transaction may well be exploitative, it is importantly exploitation of a transaction, and not exploitation of a worker per se. Instead Engels understood industrialisation to have liberated the worker from the land, which he believed was a necessary freedom to be maintained in order to accomplish social transformation and end class rule.

For Engels, home ownership turned the proletariat into capitalists themselves, and such a solution to the housing question did not come from a revolutionary idea, as Proudhon suggested, but from the bourgeois themselves in an effort to

chain workers to the land and work once again. It is therefore a form of social control.

‘How is the housing question to be settled, then? In present-day society, just as any other social question is settled: by the gradual economic levelling of demand and supply, a settlement which reproduces the question again and again and therefore is no settlement.’

(Engels, 1975 [1872]:32)

The solution of home ownership is therefore understood to maintain the capitalist system, and by bringing the property-less classes up to the propertied class, as Emil Sax suggested, the housing question is reproduced again. Home ownership would increase indebtedness and immobility for the workers whilst increasing capitalists power and exploitation (see Hodkinson, 2012), but at the same time it is portrayed as a liberating concept. ‘It is the essence of bourgeois socialism to want to maintain the basis of all the evils of present-day society and at the same time to want to abolish the evils themselves.’ (Engels, 1975[1872]:43).

For Engels, the only solution that the bourgeoisie offered to the housing question was to demolish areas of working class houses for various reasons (public health, infrastructure, economic development etc.), resulting in a displacement of people and a shifting of the problem elsewhere:

‘The most scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-glorification by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but- they appear again at once somewhere else, and often in the immediate neighbourhood’.

(Engels, 1975 [1872]:71)

This process he called ‘Haussmann’ after the French civic planner who rebuilt Paris in the 1860s (Hodkinson, 2012). It is such observations that have been hugely influential to work on housing in a more contemporary global capitalist economy. Most notably is Neil Smith’s (1982) work on gentrification and uneven development, which drew on Engels observed shifting of the problem elsewhere, in a continuing cycle of displacement. David Harvey (2008) similarly drew on

Engel's writing to highlight the process of 'accumulation by dispossession' that can be seen globally. Andy Merrifield (2014:x) has furthermore suggested that Engels' identified processes of urban redevelopment, of 'divide and rule through urban change, of altering and up scaling the urban physical environment to alter the social and political environment' is no longer only orchestrated by powerful city and national political-economic forces, but by transnational financial and corporate elites, with the support of national governments. This process he has termed 'neo-haussmannization'. For Merrifield, the class forces which are given such agency in Engels work remain ever present today, even allowing for the fact that 'whilst these class forces in and out of government aren't always consciously conspiring, they nonetheless create a global orthodoxy, one that's both creating and tearing apart a new urban fabric' (ibid:x).

Despite this on-going resonance, in many ways Engels' work is of its time and in reading Engels from a contemporary vantage point there are particular assertions that require calibration. Most notably is Engels' emphasis on the workplaces as the primary site of class struggle. Susan Saegert (2016) has recently shown how contemporary capitalism demands a re-thinking of this emphasis, and particularly of the way in which housing has become more of a site of such class struggle, and moreover gendered struggle, which was overlooked by Engels' masculine bias at this time. As revealed later, housing has become much more bound up with labour markets in a contemporary capitalist system where home ownership is now an economic indicator, intrinsically tied to finance and both national and individual economic security, as well as a signifier of social status (Glynn, 2009; Dorling 2014). In many ways this challenges Engels' understanding of housing being 'one of the innumerable smaller, secondary evils which result from the present-day capitalist mode of production' (Engels, 1975[1872]:19). Housing can now be understood to be a primary site of struggle and inequality in a contemporary capitalist political economy. It should also be noted that whilst class forces remain central to the contemporary housing debate, the class system is no longer as rudimentary as the industrial proletariat and bourgeoisie of Engels' time. Instead it is perhaps an appropriate juncture to return to Rex and Moore's (1967) notion of 'housing classes' wherein the housing

market is understood to be increasingly determined by class conflict than labour markets (although heavily linked). Developing Robert Park and Ernest Burgess' work on 1920s Chicago, Rex and Moore use Burgess' concentric ring model (which identified zones of use from the central business district) as starting point to outline how housing situations have a definite distribution in the city. They therefore developed classes based on housing (outright owner occupiers, mortgaged owner occupiers, council house tenants, private tenants of a whole house, private tenants of part of a house), rather than economic situation. I will return to this theory at points throughout the thesis.

2.2.1 The Resonance of State Solutions

Notwithstanding the above contemporary socio-economic differences that centre housing as a primary centre of struggle, Engels' writing on housing continues to be relevant and prescient in many ways to the conditions that we continue to experience today. This is particularly the case over the conditions of private rented housing for marginalised and low-income groups, and home ownership becoming increasingly unaffordable for many people (Glynn, 2009). Despite claims that there is a housing shortage, Engels' (1975[1872]:32) contention that 'there is already a sufficient quantity of houses in the big cities to remedy immediately all real housing *shortage*, provided they are used judiciously' is an argument still being made by scholars today; it is housing distribution as opposed to shortage that is the problem (Neil Smith (2016 [2012]; Dorling 2014). A further point worthy of noting is Engels' identification of the housing shortage being explained as the wickedness of man (as opposed to the system), thereby shifting the problem 'from the economic sphere into the moral sphere' (Engels 1975 [1872]:44). Again this point is highly relevant to contemporary debates on social pathology and moralising of the 'underclass' (see Katz, 1989; Wacquant, 1997; Lupton, 2003; Crump 2002).

The pioneering work of Engels not only resonates today because of the similarities with the housing and social conditions we continue to experience, but

because of the *solutions* that we offer to the continuing housing question. Intervention in housing by the bourgeoisie through philanthropic ventures are not solutions, according to Engels, but are a form of class control which tie workers to a place and labour and reproduce the capitalist order of society. Since capital alone will not solve the housing question, there are 'only two other expedients: self-help on the part of the workers, and state assistance.' (Engels 1975 [1872]:59). In considering these two solutions Engels draws on the experience of England as the 'motherland' of industrialisation. He takes up Sax's advocacy for self-help in the form of building societies, which both agree are not necessarily cooperative, but speculative in nature.

Whilst Sax considers building societies to offer an opportunity for the working classes to become a 'propertied class', Engels is quick to point out the limitations of this model only benefiting the better off workforce whilst providing large interest returns to the petty bourgeoisie (who make up the majority of small cooperative building societies). As we will go on to see in Chapter Four, this is the beginning of the financialization of housing, which has now become bound up with the state. Self-help is therefore understood to benefit only those who can afford it, and to exploit them along the way. Turning to the second solution, state assistance, Engels again looks to the English governments legislative response (such as the Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Act 1855, Local Government Act 1888, Artisan's Dwelling Act 1875, Public Works Loan Act 1875), also held in esteem by Sax as being socially progressive. Whilst noting that such legislation is 'infinitely superior' (ibid:41) to anything that has been done elsewhere in Europe, for Engels such central legislation was ultimately ineffective because English local governments were 'recognized centres of corruption of every kind, of nepotism and jobbery'¹ (ibid:65).

It is this local level of government that Engels considers to be particularly powerful and therefore problematic. Whilst the central state may legislate under what he calls a 'sense of duty' (although importantly he implies such measures

¹ Jobbery is described as 'the use of a public office to the private advantage of the official or his family' Engels (1975[1872]:65)

are insufficient and tokenistic) it is the local governments that are either incapable or unwilling to implement such laws. He specifically focuses on the electoral ward system in England that results in landowners and landlords having a strong political presence and so 'no town councillor who desires to be re-elected dare vote for the application of this law in his constituency' (ibid:66). For Engels, the power of local elites prevents social reform and it is only when under pressure from workers that they will be compelled to act. Otherwise elites will avoid carrying out social reform and seek to maintain their position of power in the existing social order. Therefore,

'It is perfectly clear that the state as it exists today is neither able nor willing to do anything to remedy the housing calamity. The state is nothing but the organized collective power of the possessing classes, the landowners and the capitalists, as against the exploited classes, the peasants and the workers. What the individual capitalists (and it is here only a question of these because in this matter the landowner, who is concerned, also acts primarily in his capacity as capitalist) do not want, their state also does not want. If therefore the individual capitalists deplore the housing shortage, but can hardly be moved to palliate even superficially its most terrifying consequences, the *collective* capitalist, the state, will not do much more. At most it will see to it that that measure of superficial palliation which has become customary is carried into execution everywhere uniformly.'

(Engels 1975[1872]:67-68)

Work has been done which continues to highlight the way in which contemporary state intervention in housing ultimately benefits the propertied and monied class (see for example Herring and Roseman's (2016) work on post-Katrina storm in New Orleans). Whilst such state (and non-state) forces might not always be conspiring as Merrifield (2014) suggests, in Engels' mind the ideology underpinning the state is fundamentally a capitalist one. Such an ideology is revealed through decision-making and relations within the state, something that this thesis goes on to consider at a local level. The ability and/or willingness of the state to intervene in housing (and how this intervention unfolds) to resolve the housing question is a central theme in this thesis. It will go on to argue that whilst much of Engels' housing question remains pertinent to a contemporary context, the local state today (as a solution to the housing question) is a far more complex and multi faceted organisation than it was in

Engels' day, and what we are witnessing is a new form of capitalism which requires close consideration of autonomy, agency and democracy.

In taking an in-depth case study of a particular place and trying to understand the current mode of governing housing, it is considered necessary to chart the historical development of the place to contextualise and deepen understandings of the perceived necessity of its redevelopment; what past (and people) it is that are currently being swept away. The remainder of this chapter will therefore consider the on-going housing question through the development and regeneration of the de-industrialised neighbourhood of Bensham and Saltwell, seeking to extend Engels observations, which as Larsen et al (2016) suggest, is an important project both politically and analytically.

2.3 Housing Industrialisation and Political Transformation

'A Home! An Independence! And a Vote! Every man his own Landlord!'

(Turk's Head Benefit Building Society, 1859, cited in Manders, 1973:165)

Gateshead was heavily mined for coal since 1344, and became the most productive coalfield in the Country for some time (Manders, 1979). Although mining continued in wider Gateshead up until 1927, the industry had reached its peak by the mid-1700s and was already being replaced by other heavy industries along the banks of the river Tyne such as ironworks, glassworks, and chemical works (Taylor and Lovie, 2004). This was the beginning of the wider industrial revolution that went on to transform the town. Housing in Gateshead at this time was concentrated on higher sections of the hillside of the river Tyne in areas known as Hillgate and Pipewellgate, as well as the Town Centre. From the early 1800s, the population and resources increased very rapidly as a result of the changing economic conditions of industrialisation. This put significant pressure on local housing provision, which in turn caused overcrowding, and a rapid deterioration of living conditions (Roger, 1974). Such conditions, coupled with increasing pollution from heavy industry along the river in close proximity to housing, sparked the out-migration of wealthier residents to a surrounding ancient common land known at the time as 'town fields' (Taylor and Lovie,

2004:37), see Figure 3. This area was to become the first suburb of Gateshead and later became known as Bensham.

Figure 3: 1873 Map of Town Fields, Bensham.

Courtesy of Gateshead Library



Since its medieval holding by successive Bishops of Durham, Gateshead was administered through the select parish court of St Mary's, and later a borough court, which was controlled by borough-holders who were usually appointed prominent merchants. For holding office, borough holders received an annual grant and entitlement to areas of pasture on the town fields (Manders, 1979; Taylor and Lovie, 2004). However, as this area came under pressure for development with worsening housing conditions in central Gateshead, an Act was passed in 1814, which permitted the enclosure and fragmentation of the town fields. This common land was then divided among borough holders in 1818. Although it is unclear when exactly such common land ceased to be truly *common* and passed to the effective control of borough-holders (Manders, 1979), the growing power of borough holders culminated in the passing of the 1814 Act, (brought to parliament by the borough holders themselves) which legitimised

this locally established arrangement. Some borough holders went on to build houses for themselves, others sold land on for development, and the area emerged as a semi-rural and middle class suburb with dispersed dwellings ranging from detached villas (such as Barrington Villa and Woodbine Cottage) to isolated high quality terraced houses (such as Claremont Place and Barrington Place). By the early 1830s, and entering into the Victorian era, more terraced houses had been built and such development continued at a slow and sporadic rate for a number of years.

The carving up of this common land as a *solution* to the local housing conditions of poverty and overcrowding (the housing question) resonates with Engels' notion that local elites in power will only pose a solution that is ultimately in their own interests. In this case the self-allocation of land by the borough holders for their own housing requirements (or those who could afford to buy it) appears to have been part of a wider struggle for local power between the church and borough holders. For at this time, Manders (1979) notes there was a period of confusion over administration and a scrabble for power which was fuelled on one side by the self interest and growing influence of the borough holders and on the other side by the historic administration rights of the church. By the turn of the nineteenth century there was a growing recognition that more of a collective and democratic voice was required, a movement that was felt across industrialized towns and cities, which were becoming the 'natural location of politics' (Fraser, 1976:283).

There was an effort in Gateshead in the early 1830s to increase local representation through public meetings, and the town received its first Member of Parliament in 1832. It was shortly after this began that the question of municipal government was raised nationally in 1833, and Gateshead formed part of the Municipal Corporations Inquiry Commission. Despite opposition by the borough-holders and freemen, Gateshead was granted as a municipal borough under the 1835 Act with the associated ward system and elected seats (it later became a county borough in 1889). As part of this process borough-holders were granted entitlement to retain the land rights they had established themselves,

but the administrative power of this organisation began to dwindle from this point onwards. The municipal corporation, or local government, grew in its role and responsibility. Importantly however it included local industrialists and many councillors were 'deeply involved in the ownership of houses in the borough' (Manders, 1979:48). The local government at this time is described by a local historian as 'controlled by a clique [but] reasonably free from corruption' (Manders, 1979:46).

Continued poor living conditions (and a cholera outbreak in 1853), industrial boom and increasing population were pressures which culminated in the intensive development of Bensham to an area of high density housing for workers. Land was rapidly sold on for development by the borough-holders as well as surrounding large private estates such as Shipcote and Redheugh Park Estates. The Park Estate² was sold in separate parcels to various established industrialists (such as chemical manufacturers, colliery agents and glass manufacturers) and a consortium of Newcastle tradesmen, all for private house building. The substantial terraces at this time were occupied by lower middle class residents, such as pawn-brokers, clerks and agents (Manders, 1973). The working classes 'traded up' into the tenement houses that the lower middle class vacated.

Although private renting was the dominant form of housing tenure at this time, the purchase of property was facilitated through local building societies, of which a number had formed. For example, the Gateshead Union Building Society was established in 1838 and the Turk's Head Benefit Building Society sought to advance home ownership to the working class, announcing in 1859 'A Home! An Independence! And a Vote! Every man his own Landlord!' (cited in Manders, 1973:165)³. However as Engels suggested, whilst building societies offered an

² The Park Estate was held by the Ellison Family from the Bishop of Durham and the lease for this was surrendered to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to be sold between 1865 and 1870 (Manders, 1973).

³ Voting rights in Britain were historically tied to property rights, and only *men* who owned a property above a certain value were eligible to vote. Although the Reform Act of 1832 extended voting right for men who rented properties, again over a certain value, this still

opportunity for better off workers to own their own properties, many of these building societies were speculative, and provided huge financial returns to landowners and industrialists-turned-developers. This turn towards house building and speculative finance can be understood as a process that David Harvey (1978) calls 'capital switching'⁴. The emergence of building societies are crucial to this process of capital switching and the financial institutions controlling them are 'mediating' the relations between the two circuits of capital and subsequent capital flows (Harvey 1979:113). Switching however, can cause further crisis since there is 'a perpetual struggle in which capital builds a physical landscape appropriate to its own condition at a particular moment in time, only to have to destroy it, usually in the course of a crisis, at a subsequent point in time' (Harvey, 1978:117), which is a pertinent point to come back to.

2.3.1 The Birth of Tyneside Flats

Although there was limited control over house-building by local or national governments at this time, it was not uncommon locally for land owners themselves to control the development via covenants on the sale of land; thereby restricting its future use or development. In 1866 such a condition was placed on the sale of land in the area that stipulated houses should be of good quality and for no more than two families to inhabit, with separate facilities as far as possible, in order to deter multi-tenanting and overcrowding. This stipulation, alongside a favourable system of rates, gave rise to the design and development of Tyneside Flats by William Affleck (Taylor and Lovie, 2004), a housing type which became typical of the region more widely and remains in concentration in

restricted the majority of men from voting who rented smaller properties in lower value areas.

⁴ Building on Karl Marx, Harvey outlines the various cycles of capitalism and the nature of capital flows between them. The primary circuit of capital (manufacturing) has a tendency to over-accumulate, resulting in over production, or surplus capital or labour and this circuit of capital therefore comes into crisis at particular moments. This can be resolved by switching into a secondary capital circuit (the built environment) for either production, such infrastructure or for consumption such as housing. The capital flow into a fixed asset requires the period of over-accumulation which is a tendency of the primary circuit, however Harvey suggests that such switching of capital flows is not smooth, and there is often under-investment in the secondary circuit. Importantly the switch of flows from primary to secondary requires a supply of money and credit that he calls 'fictional capital' in advance of actual production and consumption.

Bensham today. Tyneside Flats resemble conventional two (or occasionally three) storey terraced houses of the period, but consist of two self contained dwellings on top of each other with separate front and back doors. (See Figure 4). Tyneside flats built at this time (1866-1875) tended to be occupied by skilled tradesmen. The majority of Saltwell was constructed from the 1880s onwards with streets such as Westbourne and Eastbourne Avenues offering larger Tyneside flats and houses leading up to Saltwell Park⁵, within a compact grid layout typical of the industrial period, with long straight streets having few amenities, except corner shops, off-licences or pubs on the intersection of cross roads⁶.

Figure 4: Photograph of typical Tyneside flats (Rectory Road, Bensham)

Source: author



Although developed in varying amounts; small groups at a time, or rows at a time, local building regulations controlled the overall scale of properties and

⁵ Saltwell Park was bought by Gateshead Corporation in 1876 from stained glass manufacturer William Wailes for the sum of £32 000. It was immediately opened up to the public, with opened fields and landscaped features, and it is described by local historian Frank Manders (1973: 38) as 'a great lung of urban Gateshead'

⁶ Later waves of flat building were restricted through further covenants on the land that forbade premises selling liquor (Manders, 1973).

sanitary arrangements, which resulted in a broad uniformity of streets within a layout that was also partially dictated by the ground conditions of earlier mining activity. Whilst there was, and remains today, an initial sense of building uniformity in the area, there is a subtle variety in the design and decorative detail, which reflects different times of building and different craftsmen so that the local 'history can be traced through the architecture' (Taylor and Lovie, 2004:37).

The majority of Bensham and Saltwell had been densely developed by private developers up until the outbreak of World War I, (see Figure 5) dominated by Tyneside flats, many of which that were bought (as opposed to developers renting them out) were sold as a pair, often with the owner-occupier living in one flat, and renting the other out privately, often to relatives. By the late 1880s, the older and smaller flats were occupied by 'lower-class' residents and larger flats were occupied by the lower-middle class. There was a further out-migration of upper-middle class residents south along Durham Road, which became the separate neighbourhood of Low Fell. Furthermore, there was also an out-migration of local elites from the area:

'many of the men who had formed the 'natural leadership' of the town in the years after incorporation, had by the 1860s either retired from public life (e.g. W.H. Brockett) or had left Gateshead for more salubrious surroundings in the Tyne valley or Northumberland (e.g. George Hawks, George Crawshay).'

(Manders, 1973:19)

By the end of the 1800s, the first industrial period was coming to a close, and Gateshead found itself in an unstable economic position. Whilst housing thousands of workers, many of whom were living in cheap housing and paying low rates, the vast majority of these residents did not work in Gateshead. Instead the town, and Bensham and Saltwell specifically, housed the workers of neighbouring Newcastle and as a consequence did not receive the benefits of the higher rates for factories. As an economic depression hit the country, Gateshead

felt this most acutely; a town whose working class population continued to increase whilst employment simultaneously decreased. Visiting Gateshead in 1933, author of the 'English Journey' JB Priestly noted that residents 'live in a

Figure 5: 1919 Map of Bensham,
Courtesy of Gateshead Library



workshop that has no work for them', calling it a 'swollen industrial village' and a 'dingy dormitory' (Priestley, 1934:306). A town that had housed industrialisation was now housing its decline.

As capital now made a geographic switch, away from the heavy industries of the North East, this had a momentous impact on the built environment that industrialisation had shaped. As both Engels (1975 [1872]) and Harvey (1978)

indicated, housing (as the secondary circuit of capital) became a site of further crisis which necessitated its demolition at various points in time. The following section will go on to explore the varying modes of state intervention in housing that followed this period. It will chart how, despite the withdrawal of industrialists and powerful elites from the area and the stabilisation of local administration, governance of housing continued to be dominated by a particular set of people; now the landlords.

2.3.2 Reluctantly Governing Housing – The Housing Question in Gateshead

‘Dirty people make dirty houses, [I will] not interfere with their pleasure in filth’

(Alderman Dunn (1899), cited in Manders, 1973:171)

Living conditions and associated health concerns in wider Gateshead in the late 1800s led the Medical Officer of Health at the time to appeal for the provisions of the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act to be implemented (Manders, 1979). This was a public health act (as opposed to a housing act specifically) which enabled local authorities to compulsorily purchase and demolish slum housing, and replace it with new build housing for rent. Despite such powers being available to them however, Gateshead Council (and indeed many other Councils across England) were reluctant to make such provisions. A special committee of the Council reported in 1899 that:

‘They saw no reason for the building of workingmen’s dwellings by the Corporation, as there were always plenty of that class of house to be procured within a reasonable distance’

(cited in Manders, 1973:171)

In striking resonance with Engels’ (1975 [1872]:67) observations of the English state being ‘neither able nor willing to do anything to remedy the housing calamity’, Gateshead Council at this time were evidently unwilling to intervene in local housing conditions. It is interesting to note the use of the term ‘class of house’ in the 1899 Council committee, which notes the classification of housing; speaking directly to Rex and Moore’s (1967) later theory of housing class. The reluctance of the Council to intervene was said to be due to a vested interest of councillors (Taylor and Lovie, 2004), many of whom were landlords seeking to

dissuade the Council from implementing their powers. For example, Robert Affleck (son of William who we saw earlier had considerably profited from the building of Tyneside flats in the neighbourhood, and both of whom were local councillors) said in 1906:

‘If that Bill [Housing and the Working Class Bill] became law it would...filch away the liberty of the subject. Occupants of lodging houses, people who often would make no effort to better their environment, were by this Bill to be given the same privileges as ordinary citizens...’

(cited in Manders 1973:171)

The attitude towards housing in Gateshead was synonymous with the national attribution of property rights with civil (i.e. voting) rights whereby renters were not considered to be ‘ordinary citizens’. Instead their living conditions were blamed on their own incompetence in a moralising fashion, as we saw in the earlier quote from Alderman Dunn. Central legislation - whether it was led by a socially orientated agenda, or was intended to maintain the capitalist system as Engels suggested - was understood locally to threaten the class system that the property regime so tightly reinforced. The culmination of local landlord lobbying with a political opposition to Council house provision or any housing intervention offers quite compelling evidence of Engels’ (1975[1872]:67) view that the state comprises ‘the organized collective power of the possessing classes, the landowners and the capitalists’. The reluctance to improve housing conditions was so entrenched in Gateshead at this time, that offers to build philanthropic social housing made by the Sutton Dwelling Trust was rejected by the Council in 1911, and was instead taken up by Newcastle Council (Manders, 1973). A scheme for working class housing put forward by the Local Government Board⁷ was also refused in 1917, in a further rejection of central interference.

Despite growing central legislation (which also included the Housing Act 1909) putting pressure on local authorities to intervene in housing, it wasn’t until the 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act, and the ‘Homes fit for Heroes’ movement

⁷ The Local Government Board was a central government organization which oversaw local authorities on issues concerning public health, poor relief and local government between 1871 and 1919.

following the first World War (Mullins and Murie, 2006) that local authorities were effectively forced to examine the local housing problems. Whilst earlier legislation had left implementation to councils' discretion, the 1919 Act compelled local authorities to assess housing needs of their areas. The later 1923 Housing Act subsidised the building of houses for rent where they were needed. Therefore in 1919 Gateshead Council commissioned a survey of housing needs, which highlighted the necessity of action on overcrowding and substandard living conditions. One in three people in Gateshead were living in overcrowded conditions compared to one in eleven nationally (Taylor and Lovie, 2004). The 1919 Act was significant for Gateshead in forcing the Council to intervene in housing, and began a long period of slum clearance across the borough. So up until this point local living conditions, the very essence of the housing question, had been dealt with in Gateshead as Engels himself outlined; in a way that benefited the local capitalist class, through local state 'jobbery'. However from 1919 onwards central government legislation on public health grounds, and later economic development grounds⁸, saw a programme of mass house building which shifted the relations of central-local governance. This was most likely seen as a loss of local control by those in local government, but a relief for those in need of improved living conditions.

Although the areas of Bensham and Saltwell were well developed by this stage, a new estate of 204 houses was created in the mid-1920s on the periphery of Bensham, the Racecourse estate, which comprised of standard semi detached houses described as 'garden suburbs' at the time (Taylor and Lovie, 2004:51), influence by Ebenezer Howards national Garden City movement. Council house building expanded rapidly from the mid-1920s to the late 1930s (augmented by

⁸ The effect of declining industrial areas was an economic development target of central government through the Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act in 1934 which was introduced to give aid to areas with the highest unemployment, supporting a wide range of activities on general economic development and social improvements. There was a specific focus encouraging light industry within well planned and clean industrial environments and in Gateshead this led to the development of Team Valley Trading Estate (TVTE), which intended to bring social stability and an economic base to the area (Taylor and Lovie, 2004). Although much of the 1930s housing and industrial development later became the target of stringent post-war planning restrictions on 'urban sprawl' (see Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2011), the TVTE was successful in its initial aims, and continues to be a large employer in the area.

the 1930 Housing Act, which gave increased powers of slum clearance), although the demand for Council housing still outstripped supply at this time. The remaining pockets of land in Bensham and Saltwell were in-filled with 1930s council housing, although the design and quality in this period was of lower standard than earlier Council housing which Taylor and Lovie (2004) suggest reflects the more utilitarian attitudes to mass house building that dominated across the country. The period of mass Council house building from the 1930s was the response by national government to a housing crisis, and subsequently a way in which it could maintain political support in the aftermath of the two World Wars. The notion of building your way out of a crisis is one that we can draw parallels with in the current national housing policy, albeit under different circumstances (see Dorling, 2014; Glynn 2009) as we shall go on to see.

There was, however, a national concern that Council housing was unaffordable to many lower-waged residents because of the rent levels, minimum income requirements and tenant selection processes (Mullins and Murie, 2006). Local authorities were therefore encouraged to build smaller and cheaper housing, and to set reasonable or even subsidised rents for those most in need, although this advice was often ignored by many local authorities. Local authorities across the country had a tendency to regard wealthier residents as better tenants, and management practices excluded the most vulnerable people from accessing council housing, or filtered them into the worst dwellings available, thereby having a segregating or residualising effect (Forrest and Murie, 1989). This highly selective nature of the state therefore shifts the housing question elsewhere as opposed to solving it, as Engels clearly suggested. This appears to have been the case in Gateshead, where the Council were reported to consider residents of the slum clearance areas not to be 'suitable tenants' for such new housing estates. Instead they were accused of cherry picking residents for such estates whilst housing poorer residents in older industrial areas of the town (Taylor and Lovie, 2004:56). It was therefore the case that many residents displaced through slum clearances but unable to acquire a Council house, sought cheap private rents in areas such as Bensham and Saltwell's Tyneside flats; the area again offering cheap housing for those who need it.

The local authority can therefore be seen to maintain an elitist and selective attitude towards housing, despite now being required to provide housing for those most in need. The form of local government that emerged from this specific growth and politics of the place was autonomous but channelled this autonomy to maintain the class system that was reinforced by the property system. This form of government was disrupted by central government to some extent by the attempts of social pacification after the First World War, although not entirely. It would take a further world war and the rise of the welfare state to further heighten this central control in housing governance.

2.4 Housing De-industrialisation: the 'Wobbly Pillar' of the Welfare State

The post-World War II Labour government under Clement Attlee came to power amidst a new and populist⁹ climate of social democracy. The Second World War had further fractured the historic British class system, bringing about an aspiration for more social equity, in part realised through the introduction of the welfare state and Keynesian economics. The shape of local government had already been subject to increasing central legislation and was further altered through the consolidation and nationalisation of key services. Local powers such as hospitals and poor relief were limited in favour of a more strategic approach. The ideology underpinning these changes is contested: Dearlove and Saunders (1984) imply that the moves can be seen as an attempt to undermine local democracy or power, whilst Cochrane (1993) sees it as a necessity to create national systems that at least in principle were fair and effective. Given the earlier form of elitist local administration in Gateshead, Cochrane's latter point seems to hold the most merit as local democracy and power was heavily in favour of industrialists, landlords and local administrators at various different times. Also, whilst centralising many functions, the welfare state also heightened

⁹ Populist is taken to mean representing the interests of ordinary people en masse (although there are problems associated with relying on homogenizing large groups of 'ordinary' or conversely 'elite' people within this). Interestingly populism at this time involved a move to the left, but in its current use of the word is associated (often as a pejorative term) with a move to the right, and nationalism.

local powers for education, town planning and social services. Spending at a local level on council house provision was also increased.

However, the inclusion of housing as a social service within the welfare state is more complicated and contested than other services. The urgency to deliver post-war housing positioned it as a social and political problem or at least a challenge. Malpass (2005), nonetheless, argues that it was never intended to be part of a long term plan to reform the housing system, which still retained a strong private market. So whilst the UK state endeavoured to provide for those most in need, and recognised the social and political importance of housing, it developed alongside a predominant private sector: a situation that 'left housing as the least decommmodified and most market determined of the welfare state services' (Malpass, 2005:74), and led it to be termed the 'wobbly pillar' of the welfare state (Torgersen, 1987).

Since housing is so heavily linked to labour markets and economic policy, the success of the wider welfare programme led to an increase in private home ownership. There has been a consistency across governments in relation to owner occupation, which can be traced back to post war housing policy, where the state has reacted to the shortcomings of the private market (Cole and Furbey, 1994), and effectively supported the private sector in maintaining the construction industry, retreating from this role when it becomes profitable (Glynn, 2009). So housing policy and state intervention has continually shaped the wider housing market and aided it through the welfare state with the understanding that private enterprise could and should provide housing for most people and the state is responsible for large scale intervention through slum clearance programmes (Malpass, 2005), and council housing. The following section considers how such slum clearance programmes were carried out in Gateshead.

2.4.1 Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation

The long term problem of overcrowding remained in central Gateshead and was intensified following World War II as displaced people came to live in the 'dormitory' of cheap housing, which was relatively unaffected in terms of war damage. Unfortunately people then moved into housing that had already been targeted for state-led demolition, so that by 1942 there were 5,260 people living in properties scheduled for demolition in Gateshead (Taylor and Lovie, 2004). A period of vigorous slum clearance took place from the 1950s through to the 1960s, which was combined with a national trend for mass housing building inspired by Le Corbusier's *Unite d'Habitation* (Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2011; Taylor and Lovie, 2004), encouraged by the Housing Subsidies Act of 1956. This period embraced the concept of 'modern' high-rise housing to rehouse residents from slum clearance areas. An example of this can be seen at Chandless estate, to the east of the town centre, which involved the demolition of hundreds of Victorian terraced houses (See Figure Six), and the rehousing of residents within three sixteen storey tower blocks, as well as smaller housing blocks, designed by Gateshead Borough County Architect in 1960. A further example of this period of architecture can be found in Bensham at Bensham Court (Bensham Road) following the clearance of an old rectory house, although the remaining built form of this area remained largely untouched. Importantly the neighbourhood continued to attract some of the displaced residents from slum clearance areas, as poorer and displaced residents moved into areas with concentrations of cheap housing. Again, relatively cheap and high-density housing was experiencing Engels' shifting process, so that we can begin to see a pattern emerge of the requirement of such housing, but its simultaneous 'decline' in terms of a concentration of poverty.

Set within a national period of state modernisation and streamlined decision making within larger, more business like environments (Cochrane, 1993), by the mid-1960's Gateshead Council was achieving momentum with what was becoming a considerable house-building programme. However it was also around this time of mass expansion that there was a national realisation that the

type of high-rise living accommodation being provided brought with it highly negative connotations (Mullins and Murie, 2006:32), most notably the lack of outside space and the relative lack of a community spirit, often resulting from a lack of facilities and cultural infrastructure (such as public houses and shops). This style of housing in the area has largely since undergone demolition, the Chandless estate most recently (2015-2016).

Figure 6: Photographs of Chandless Estate, Victorian Housing (circa 1956) and replacement high-rise and mid-rise flats (1963).
(Source: Gateshead Libraries Local Studies Collection)



In the mid to late 1960s Gateshead Council responded with a new approach to housing provision: the creation of 'village' schemes. Larger examples of such development can be found on the edges of Bensham at St Cuthberts Village and Clasper Village. These villages were designed to be self-contained with roof gardens, raised walk-ways and communal areas aimed at attracting and retaining young people. However, people were moved into the developments before the supporting amenities were provided and the communal areas that were designed to foster socialisation had the opposite effect and led to social unrest, with communal areas falling into disrepair (Taylor and Lovie, 2004). The aspirations for building communities within urban villages was never realised and the villages instead housed people from slum clearance areas, and became a concentration for social problems such as unemployment and crime which led

the Council to demolish St Cuthberts Village in the 1990s, and Clasper Village is currently undergoing demolition at the time of writing. Smaller examples of village schemes can be found within Bensham at this time; following the demolition of some of the smaller early Victorian Tyneside flats, a 'Radburn'¹⁰ style architecture was introduced. These smaller pockets remain, but have been highly criticised architecturally for failing to connect with their surroundings and lacking in character (Taylor and Lovie, 2004).

The late-1960s saw significant modernist designs for housing and public buildings in Gateshead which included a twenty nine story high rise building in Dunston known locally as 'The Rocket' and the town centre car park which had gained notoriety given its central prominence amid some violent scenes in the film 'Get Carter'. Such developments in Gateshead at this time are described by Mark as Tewdwr-Jones (2016: no page) as:

'the height of both planners' and architects' frivolity with the urban realm. The professionals treated the city as a machine but at the expense of the need for human scale and a sense of place.'

Perhaps in part as a result of this architectural disconnect with scale and sense of place, as well as the social problems associated with high rise living, both of these examples of modernist architecture have since been demolished. Also in the late-1960s was the Tyneside Major Highway Programme which was a strategic plan for highway improvement across the region. This programme led to the compulsory purchase and demolition of buildings in and around Bensham and the town centre in order to create a considerable road network comprising of a large flyover and associated access roads. The development of this road network proved to be critical in the future of Bensham and Saltwell and Gateshead town centre, as such *improvements* essentially bypassed these areas in order to gain quicker access into and out of Newcastle. This road network has aided the decline of the town centre by severing its connectivity with surrounding areas and encouraging people to pass it as a destination. The demolishing of housing to

¹⁰ A Radburn layout is named after the experimental housing design in New Jersey, USA which influenced British housing design, and specifically the garden villages in the 1960s. The design attempts to separate modes of transport within an enclosed and safe environment.

enable infrastructure, which then in turn restricts capital flows is an example of Harvey's (1978) capital switching; creating a physical landscape appropriate to a particular time, which then contributes to/experiences a further crisis of capital justifying its subsequent demolition.

Nationally, it has been said that the 1960s was a time when poverty was 'rediscovered' (Green and Chapman, 1992:242), and urban policies at the time assumed that deprivation was concentrated geographically in a 'culture of poverty' which implied deviant residents were at the heart of such urban decline. As such they could be targeted through area-based experimental central government involvement, heavily influenced by the American 'War on Poverty' programme (McCarthy, 2007). One such central government policy was the Urban Programme (1967) which focused on specific places of deprivation by offering local authorities grants of 75% of the total cost of projects on education, housing, health, and welfare. Although emphasis of the Urban Programme was on small scale, experimental, self-help and co-ordinated practices, there was little central control over how this was applied locally (McCarthy, 2007).

Faced with governing large areas of housing deprivation, Gateshead Council was now in a position to welcome central government funding for housing intervention, and was a recipient of Urban Programme funding which it used for further housing demolition. Although the programme provided a cash injection into certain localities, this policy type was not considered to take account of the structural issues of wider economic change that underpinned poverty (see Rees and Lambert, 1985). The later Community Development Project (CDP) (1969) was, however, pioneering in its efforts to understand the causes of urban deprivation; the project focusing on twelve deprived locations across the country, working jointly with universities, community workers and local people. A primary finding of the project was that the government's view of poverty was based on 'social pathology' or 'victim blaming' (Green and Chapman, 1992; Pacione, 1997), a notion that Engels had originally identified in explaining the housing shortage on the wickedness of man; shifting the economic sphere into the moral sphere. The CDP projects concluded that poverty was 'a consequence

of fundamental inequalities in our present political and economic system' (CDP, 1974). This finding caused significant tension between the initiative and the political establishment at the time and funding was summarily withdrawn in 1978. Nonetheless, this dismantling of the CDP projects could do little to avert the way in which they served to influence wider attitudes and more alternative 'structural' understandings of the cause of poverty and potential solutions, and also of course the on-going housing question. This included a call to consider self-help solutions based on co-operative and informal sharing economies (see Pahl, 1978), which resonates with Emil Sax's solutions to the housing question of the 1800s. Whilst the findings of the CDP did not revolutionise the governmental attitude to poverty or housing, it can be said to have later influenced policy initiatives of urban decline and deprivation.

This section has considered the extensive slum clearance programmes in Gateshead that have been running in cycles from the 1930s, and continue today. The predominant solution to the housing question offered by the local authority has been to direct central government funding into housing demolition, to be replaced with the prevailing architectural model of the time. The transporting of architectural models and 'frivolities' (Tewdwr-Jones, 2016) of housing in the modernist era were unsuccessful, and led to further social problems. In some cases this led to the demolition of the same sites twice in living memory of residents; firstly the Victorian terraced houses, and secondly the high rise flats or 'village' schemes. State intervention in housing more widely in Gateshead has therefore had a residualising effect in Bensham and Saltwell. Demolition is not solving the housing question, but as we have identified is continually shifting it to different areas which continue to provide cheap private rents; a tenure type which has continually been in demand for people not being provided for by the state or the home ownership market.

Whilst there has been a noticeable shift in Gateshead Council accepting central government funding to pursue the national house building agenda, what is missing from this discussion is the presence of any local political opposition or contestation to such housing changes. The only evidence found indicated certain

residents were anxious about proposed improvements to properties and formed a residents association in the 1970s. However, there was no evidence of opposition to slum clearances within the local archives, history books, or even at a slum clearance event, which was attended by people who had been moved out of such housing. This may well be a methodological constraint, and particular opposition may not have been recorded (see Chapter Four for a fuller discussion on this). However it may also be the case that such opposition did not exist, or to draw momentarily on a theme examined later - was neither 'seen' nor 'heard', or was perhaps rendered invisible through the actions of instituted administrative order (cf Ranciere, 1999). This is something that Chapter Seven picks up in more contemporary situations. One example of political resistance to the housing conditions in Bensham and Saltwell is discussed in the following section.

2.4.2 Economic Decline and Old Solutions to Old Questions

By the mid 1970's the British economy was rapidly declining and this brought about a crisis within local government and the welfare state as attempts were made centrally to reduce the level of spending in these areas whilst increasing support for industry (Cochrane, 1993:18). Local authority house building ground to a halt nationally (see Mullins and Murie, 2006) and in Gateshead, although slum clearance continued under the remaining Urban Programme funding, efforts were focused on improving the fabric of older industrial parts of the town. Resource for local improvements was provided centrally through the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act, from which schemes such as the Industrial Improvement Areas and Inner City Partnerships arose. Newcastle-Gateshead was designated as one such partnership, working with central government to produce a co-ordinated strategy for general improvements in existing buildings and redundant land (Handley, 1987).

This central funding was allocated to Bensham and Saltwell through the Avenues Environmental Improvement Strategy (GMBC, 1979), which focused on boundary wall improvements, stone cleaning, traffic management and highway

upgrading of certain terrace streets. The partnership between central and local government is indicative of the shift towards Gateshead becoming reliant on central government funding and support in this time of economic decline. Additional funding from English Heritage was also provided for the on-going protection of the conservation area, and the 'Areas of older housing' (GMBC, 1980) programme began, following the termination of a previous clearance programme. This programme saw the assessment of the condition of older housing through Environmental Health inspections and areas were ranked as a whole for either redevelopment or demolition. Houses in Bensham were identified within both categories and small-scale compulsory purchases were undertaken. Intervention in housing was at this time predominantly undertaken with financial support and direction from central government alongside local authority assessments. However, a moment of local activism was sparked around housing in the early 1980s, and was led by residents frustrated with housing conditions in Saltwell, which they considered to have been blighted by local authority decision making, and stalled development schemes. In turn, this local campaign was crucial in formulating a public private partnership, the Avenues Agency, tasked to address such housing conditions. This resident activism, and the political implications of it are discussed in more detail in Chapter Six and is instrumental in understanding the political development and relations within the area and the effects on housing.

Tensions between local and central government reappeared as local government became the target of a series of reforms under the 1979 Thatcher Government, and there was a systematic shift in policy focus towards economic regeneration in an attempt to resolve the economic crisis that had been unfolding since the 1970s. This central-local state relation is discussed in more detail in Chapter three, but major policy initiatives included the development of reclaimed industrial (brownfield) land and out-of-town shopping centres. The Urban Development Grant (1982-1988) provided funding for the redevelopment of brownfield land and in Gateshead this partially funded the Metro Centre, the largest out-of-town shopping centre at the time. It was also at this time that cultural regeneration was launched, a flagship scheme for which was the Garden

Festivals. Dunston in Gateshead was one of five old industrial sites selected nationally to host a Garden Festival for six months in 1990, before being developed into a housing estate.

Property-led regeneration, featuring a significantly enhanced role for the private sector, also underpinned the government's home-ownership agenda (McCarthy, 2007). Such market-orientated policies were part of a wider neoliberal programme from central government, which sought to roll back state spending and interference and free markets through privatisation of many features of the welfare state (Gamble 1988, Jessop et al, 1988). The project of neoliberalism itself will also be discussed in more detail in relation to state theory in Chapter Three, but it is worth mentioning here that the influence of neoliberalism significantly altered the relationship between the state and the market from this point onwards and also the relationship between central and local government autonomy and control. Unlike earlier rounds of spending cutbacks of the 1970s, many commentators (such as Cochrane, 1993 and Jones and Stewart, 1983; Duncan and Goodwin, 1988) argue that the Thatcher period of centralisation was designed to undermine local autonomy. Local authorities became managerial, enabling authorities, using market-based approaches to deliver local services, often through compulsory competitive tendering (Painter, 1991). However there remained local levels of autonomy, particularly as the selective impact of the economic crisis left urban areas with major concentrations of unemployment. Local authorities in the 1980s therefore became "more ideologically differentiated across the political spectrum" (Cochrane 1993:40), with the majority of Conservative councils not surviving in urban areas amidst such unrest, and local authorities redefined their political positions. Gateshead had been a Labour held authority more or less since 1919, and this period strengthened Labour's hold in the area. A closer examination of the contemporary condition of local politics is considered in Chapter Six.

The undermining of local autonomy throughout this period was particularly felt through Thatcher's flagship Right To Buy (RTB) scheme under the 1980s Housing Act, which encouraged the sale of council houses to tenants at a reduced

rate. The RTB essentially undermined Keynesian policies and the welfare provision of housing and instead intensified the ideologically opposing Proudhonist solution to the housing question, which understood home ownership as liberating. The RTB offers us an opportunity to consider Engels' forewarnings on home owners, as it subsequently increased housing inequality and residualisation, as those unable to buy were left in less desirable council homes (Forrest and Murie, 1989a). The RTB also led to individual financial precarity with high levels of housing repossessions and an increasing reliance on the private rental sector, as the Council housing stock was significantly reduced. In her critical assessment of UK urbanization throughout the neoliberal era Anna Minton (2012) shows how seventy per cent of social housing released for sale in West Pilton in Edinburgh was bought up by investors and is now let out privately to tenants on housing benefits. The housing question was thereby created anew through RTB as a solution.

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, Bensham and Saltwell had, since its development into an area of considerably high density housing, provided affordable homes through low housing prices and private rents, which attracted people from surrounding areas that had been affected by slum clearance and redevelopment. Although private renting had been in decline nationally in the 1970s (see Rhodes, 2015 on historic rental trends), it remained strong in this neighbourhood as a result of the housing type. The deregulation of banks in the 1980s and the subsequent introduction of a 'buy-to-let' mortgage product in the 1990s saw a boom in this sector nationally: and the impact of this was experienced acutely in Bensham and Saltwell - notably through the splitting of pairs of Tyneside Flats for separate sale to private landlords.

Despite the rapid increase in private renting, living conditions within the bottom end of the private rental market, and particularly in older terraced housing (Mullins and Murie, 2006), are often very poor. One in three private rents in England do not meet the government's decent homes standard due to a lack of regulation and a lack of market alternatives, which is a pattern that this neighbourhood broadly conformed to. The private rental sector increasingly

houses marginalised groups in society, and Rugg and Rhodes (2008) have described this section of the private rental market as the 'slum' rental market due to the lack of investment and the spatial concentration of such markets in particular places. Reviews of housing history (see Malpass, 2005; Murie and Mullins, 2006) reveal that the market alone has an inability to provide decent housing for large sections of the population. The relationship of the state and the housing market is a complicated one. For example, the growth of the private rental sector has also led to huge growth in the housing benefit bill, which has risen over £35 billion a year because of uncontrolled rental increases (Dorling, 2014). Public money is therefore going directly to landlords, which Glynn (2009) sees as a further method of regressive wealth distribution under a neoliberal economic system. The relationship between the state and local housing market is a key theme that this thesis will go on to explore in more detail in Chapter Five.

2.5 Urban Regeneration

Throughout the early years of Mrs Thatcher's government, and as part of what would now be defined as 'roll-back neoliberalism' (Peck and Tickell, 2002), much regeneration funding was diverted away from schemes that had been locally orchestrated and controlled such as the Urban Programme, to ones that came under the more direct control of central government – which was keen to appoint private sector nominees- most notably the Urban Development Corporations (UDCs)¹¹(Imrie and Thomas, 1999). It is most interesting to note how this diversion of such funds was described at the time as 'worrying' in the Gateshead Policy and Resources Committee minutes (GMBC, 1990), revealing considerable local concern over an increasing lack of local control, particularly in the Tyne and Wear UDC 'misjudg[ing] the property market and...none of this has been subject to any kind of democratic control' (Byrne, 1999:143). The national Audit Commission report 'Urban Regeneration & Economic Development – the local Government Dimension' (1989) found that the strong

¹¹ Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) were QUANGO organisations set up by central government to stimulate economic development of selected places and were outside of the controls of the Town and Country Planning system. Tyne & Wear UDC was set up in 1987 and ran until 1998, focused on development along the banks of the River Tyne and Wear.

central control over regeneration funding in the late-1980s was causing tensions between central and local levels of government. One particular component of this tension was central government co-ordination, which was fragmented and saw funding being provided from different departments, with different sets of criteria associated with it, making it 'difficult to adhere to overall strategies and priorities, since service provision must conform to central government criteria if it is to receive funding' (GMBC, 1990:194).

The problem with central government co-ordination in the 1980s was the target of a significant shift in urban policy by the late-1980s and into the 1990s; to new forms of urban regeneration (Imrie and Raco, 2003; Cochrane, 2007; McCarthy, 2007). Regeneration as a policy agenda moved beyond previous eras of reconstruction, revitalisation, renewal and redevelopment which all had a greater focus on the physical, built environment (see Roberts, 2000 on the evolution of urban regeneration). Instead regeneration was offered as a holistic and integrated approach to economic, social and environmental transformation of dilapidated urban areas. There remained a strong central control of such policies and funding, and local authorities entered into a phase of competitive bidding to receive such funding. For example the City Challenge scheme encouraged local authorities to work in partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors (with the participation of local people encouraged) to undertake regeneration. There had been a sense of post-1979 'new realism' and consensus amongst political parties that local authorities could only achieve regeneration and subsequent economic development if they embraced partnership working, even amongst those most antipathetic to market- and partner-based forms of working (McCarthy, 2007; Bailey et al, 1995).

Despite its aspirations, the City Challenge did not break down issues of coordination and central-local tensions and such fragmented funding streams were eventually consolidated into the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)¹². Notwithstanding this consolidation, the competitive bidding process of City

¹² Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) was an area-based initiative which invited bids from local authorities for specific regeneration projects (Cochrane, 2007:61)

Challenge was maintained because, under the established neoliberal logic, it was understood to be effective in fostering an enterprise culture (Oatley, 1995; McCarthy, 2007). However, competitive bidding disadvantaged smaller authorities due to a lack of resources and shifted the focus on the quality of bids as opposed to needs, which further disadvantaged deprived areas (McCarthy, 2007). Gateshead went on to secure SRB funding, initially for continued clearance of older housing, although in later phases funding became focused on a wider programme of public art which saw the commissioning of a large amount of art works across the borough. Most significantly amongst this was the 'Angel of The North' by Antony Gormley; successful in raising the profile of Gateshead nationally and internationally. This gave the Council credibility under the SRB funding logic, to go on to secure further funding for developments along the quayside, such as the Sage and the Baltic Flour Mill, and the Millennium Bridge. A cultural hub was thereby created and became an important part of regeneration of the town. This can be seen as part of the wider cultural turn championed by Richard Florida (2002), where culture is used to promote the economic potential of places (Cochrane, 2007).

Urban regeneration and planning under the New Labour Government's (1997-2010) 'Third Way' policy agenda endeavoured to focus on community engagement, capacity building and 'place shaping'¹³ (Giddens, 1998). Attempts were made in the early 2000s to shift central power to local governments and neighbourhoods in a move that was termed 'new localism' (see Stoker 2004, Davies 2008 a, b), although such ambitions did not come to fruition (see Painter et al, 2011 and Ellison and Ellison 2006), and there remained a strong central policy lead on the regeneration of places. Area-based regeneration initiatives, such as the New Deal for Communities¹⁴, were designed to promote social-mix and stabilise neighbourhoods through the process of trickle-down economics. However, the justification of such spatial fixes relied on pathological

¹³ Place-shaping as a strategic role of local government was put forward by Sir Michael Lyons inquiry into Local Government Funding for 'the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens' (Lyons, 2007:3).

¹⁴ New Deal for Communities was an area-based regeneration programme which targeted 39 of the most deprived neighbourhoods, allocating approximately £50 million to each, under the rhetoric of the community empowerment (see Watt, 2009).

rationalisations of ‘deserving’ and ‘underserving’ (Wacquant, 2008; Tyler, 2013) and stereotypes of the ‘underclass’, arguably without considering the underlying structural issues (see Crump, 2002; Hastings 2004; Hancock and Mooney 2013). Such policies were therefore heavily criticised for being an unsustainable top-down process (Davies, 2009), which prioritised the visual aesthetics of places above the needs of people living in them (Mitchell, 2003). They also exacerbated the ‘neighbourhood effect’ (Lupton, 2003); facilitating the outflow of better-off residents who were subsequently followed by services and businesses, leaving neighbourhoods in deepened deprivation (Jarvis et al, 2011). This outflow of wealthier residents, and socio-economic residualisation, however, is also mirrored to the geography of interventions that facilitates the inflow of wealthier residents to particular areas. This is what many commentators consider to be a form of state-led gentrification (see Glynn 2009; Imrie, Lees and Raco, 2009; Watt 2009; Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2010; Lees, 2014), a visceral and revanchist process of capital appropriation (MacLeod, 2002). The earlier notion of holistic and sustainable regeneration became fractured in urban policy, with a focus on the economy taking precedence and social/community issues being headed under a separate discourse of ‘renewal’ (Jones and Evans, 2008).

2.5.1 Housing Market Renewal

Despite the earlier culture-inspired regeneration of Gateshead quayside, Bensham and Saltwell remained a pocket of concentrated unemployment and deprivation. Because house prices are strongly linked to labour markets, Bensham and Saltwell conforms to a broader geographical pattern of low house prices being concentrated in ex-industrial areas across the North (see Dorling, 2014; Cameron, 2006). This geographic concentration of low house prices became the subject of further central intervention in the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Programme. Introduced in 2002 in selected local areas across the North and West Midlands of England, this programme identified areas deemed to be enduring protracted ‘housing market failure’, and recommended ‘radical and sustained action to replace obsolete housing with modern

sustainable accommodation, through demolition and new building or refurbishment' (ODPM, 2003:24). NewcastleGateshead became one of nine pathfinder areas within which the neighbourhood of Bensham and Saltwell was one area of regeneration focus.

The longstanding Victorian housing stock was understood in this programme agenda to be obsolete; originally 'built for an industrial working class' but now 'not suited to a modern knowledge economy' (Nevin, 2006, cited in Allen and Crookes, 2009:461). HMR encouraged radical action to replace such obsolete housing and a total of 440 dwellings were earmarked for demolition in Saltwell and Bensham, predominantly Tyneside Flats which had not been improved through earlier schemes of refurbishment (see Figure 7). Comparing the historical map we saw earlier at Figure 5, Figure 7, is indicative of a specific way of seeing and knowing the place, its problems and potentials. This is something that will be considered more fully in Chapter Five.

Stuart Cameron (2006) charts the changing discourse in regeneration at this time and considers that HMR was less about housing market failure and more about the provision of better quality houses for the growing middle class. Chris Allen (2008) develops this idea in a phenomenological study of the relationship between social class and the housing market in a HMR neighbourhood in Liverpool. Allen argues that the dominant view of housing under HMR is led by the middle class consumption of it, which denigrates the working class. He concludes that HMR was institutional – or perhaps arguably state - profiteering through repositioning failed housing markets within middle class markets. This can be understood therefore as a process of accumulation through dispossession, in line with both Engels and Harvey's consideration of housing-class relations that we saw earlier. Interestingly, this understanding of HMR also resonates with the initial development of Bensham and Saltwell where local elites dispossessed common land for their own housing needs, and subsequently profited out of the need of others. Whilst this earlier process was led purely by elite political power, Chapter Five will go on to consider the more sophisticated processes of HMR, providing a closer examination of the notion of failed housing markets and the

use of evidence and expert knowledge in this process. Chapter Six will go on to draw out the contemporary political process in regeneration, and particularly a struggle for local representation as the programme was opposed and challenged by some residents. Chapter Seven considers the place of the 'public' in such processes.

As a result of historic socio-economic conditions producing a very specific housing type, Bensham and Saltwell has continued to be a source of affordable housing for both owner-occupiers and renters. Wider demolition of similar terraced streets over a period of years has resulted in the residualisation of increased deprivation in this area. The housing question has been shifted over a long-term process to Bensham and Saltwell in repeated waves. HMR is the latest solution of demolition, to provide more 'aspirational', middle-class housing, and stimulate the market. It was, however, a highly controversial programme and not immune to a shift in political policy focus, as the following section goes on to consider.










2.5.2 The Gateshead Regeneration Partnership

The coalition government came to power in 2010 with the policy agenda of the 'Big Society', which offered a set of localist and self-help policies, aimed at appealing to the left and right sides of the political spectrum. The notion of localism was re-introduced as the most recent shift in the on-going central-local tension of governing. Taken to mean decentralisation, localism was proposed as a solution to deficits of efficiency, fairness and democracy in the state (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013), thereby freeing the local government from central control. The irony that this has been set against austerity and local authority spending cuts – exacerbating the uneven geography of accumulation - has been charted by many commentators (see Davis and Pill 2012; Clarke and Cochrane, 2013), and particularly its mobilisation as 'anti state', pro-privatisation rhetoric (Featherstone et al, 2011).

Figure 7: Bensham and Saltwell Preferred Plan
GVA Grimley (2006a:20)

BENSHAM AND SALTWELL PREFERRED PLAN

DECEMBER 2005

-  Potential Clearance and Redevelopment
-  Neighbourhood Centre Improvements
-  Property/Environmental Improvements
-  Areas for Potential Future Investment
-  Neighbourhood Management
-  Community Facilities Schools, Churches etc.
-  Green Space Improvements
-  Key Movement Corridors
-  Rail Links

- A. Cricket & Rugby Club
- B. Windmill Hills Primary School
- C. St Joseph RC Primary School
- D. Health Centre
- E. Alexandra Road Infants School
- F. Kingdom Hall
- G. Hotel
- H. Christ Church
- I. Gateshead Jewish Boys School
- J. Bewick Centre
- K. Synagogue
- L. Brighton Avenue Primary School
- M. Caedmon Community Infant School
- N. Caedmon Community Primary School
- O. Medical Centre
- P. Muslim Community Centre
- Q. Nursery
- R. Library
- S. Leisure Centre
- T. Bensham Clinic
- U. Medical Centre
- V. Shipley Art Gallery
- W. St Chads
- X. Corpus Christi Church
- Y. Corpus Christi RC Primary School
- Z. Kelvin Grove Primary School



Despite this form of localism ironically having a centralising effect in ultimate decision making and financial autonomy (Jones and Stewart, 2011), it was under this agenda that area-based regeneration programmes were ended, in favour of community-led regeneration with localised incentives for community partnerships (which may have widened economic and social disparities in another round of 'winner takes all' that was seen in previous competitive funding schemes (see Crowley et al, 2012)). Funding for HMR was withdrawn prematurely in 2010, at which time Gateshead were mid-way through their demolition programme, leaving some streets partially demolished and others partially empty.

The premature cessation of HMR funding was met with anger by some affected pathfinder local authorities, and particularly NewcastleGateshead who accused the newly appointment Coalition Government of undermining their ability to deliver the promised (and of course already commenced) regeneration to local communities. NewcastleGateshead's written evidence to the Communities and Local Government Committee (2011: Ev w 20) said:

'In short, as well as the immediate issues of residents being left living in blighted conditions, we risk missing this once-in-a-generation opportunity to finish the job and create self sustaining neighbourhoods that fully contribute to economic growth'.

The appeal to central government to 'finish the job' of the centrally orchestrated regeneration programme to enable affected areas to become self-sustaining (understood in economic terms) went unheard. Instead a local narrative emerged of Gateshead needing to move beyond its established state dependency culture (discussed further in Chapter Five), which was fitting of the wider austerity localism rhetoric. Under these conditions of austerity-localism, and building on the notion of public-private partnerships and the entrepreneurial practices established under successive governments, Gateshead Council entered into a joint venture partnership to complete HMR regeneration. A specific form of localism is therefore taking shape, one that sees the local authority regaining autonomy through housing-market-led solutions, but importantly is channelling such autonomy to carry out the top-down regeneration solutions offered under

the previous Labour government. Local authorities across the country are moving to self-funding models with the reduction in revenue support grants from central government; property and land are at the forefront of such models of self-funding, which will be further considered in Chapter Five.

Following a competitive bidding process a partnership between Gateshead Council, construction group Galliford Try and housing association Home Group was formalised in March 2012. The partnership formed a separate organisation called Gateshead Regeneration Partnership (GRP), a Limited Liability Partnership in which the Council provide the land for development, Galliford Try build the houses (under their house building arm Linden Homes) and Home Group provide funding¹⁵ and manage any social housing that is provided. The partnership is bound by a business plan and a series of legal agreements, none of which are publicly available because they are said to be commercially sensitive. Furthermore, the land portfolio the Council are providing goes beyond the HMR sites and includes nineteen publicly owned sites of varying types (greenfield and brownfield) across the borough. This is a long-term partnership expected to build 2,400 homes over 15 to 20 years.

As we saw earlier public-private partnership working has long been established in regeneration policy, however despite this, it remains an ‘amorphous concept’ (McCarthy, 2007:17) that includes a variety of relationships and agreements that differ in form, structure and politics. Whilst it may be such ambiguity that allows such partnership working to be flexible, and straddle political and ideological spectrums (McCarthy, 2007), this research positions itself to make unique contributions through an in-depth investigation of a particular partnership, which is a growing mode of housing delivery. This is particularly pertinent to understanding changes in local governance more widely at a time of austerity, when local governments are increasingly under pressure to become self funding through portfolios of housing, land and property as we will go on to see in Chapter Five.

¹⁵ Funding was provided from the Homes and Communities Agency, but has since been withdrawn in Housing and Planning Act 2016, and the scope of Home Groups role in the partnership is, at the time of writing, under consideration.

2.6 Reframing the Housing Question in Bensham and Saltwell

Returning to Engels' 'Housing Question' has been useful to reveal the enduring significance of many contemporary housing conditions and solutions, and the way in which Engels understood them at the time. The dialectic provided in Engels' housing question remains today in a more complex political-economic system, and yet one in which housing is central. Hodkinson (2012) contends that on one hand the socialist underpinning of the welfare state is defended as a necessary alternative to the market, yet on the other hand – in terms of that 'wobbly pillar' outlined earlier - private housing is still held up to be liberating for the individual through anarchist self-help alternatives such as housing co-operatives. He argues this diversion is the dissonance in the political left that stems from Engels' arguments against Proudhon and Sax. For Hodkinson this has weakened both causes and strengthened the hand of the privatising state, and he calls for a set of 'ethical co-ordinates' (Gibson-Graham, 2006) to guide anti-capitalist housing politics. Whilst Hodkinson and others go on to explore alternative solutions to the housing question, it is the changing nature of the local state that is the focus of this research. The state for Madden and Marcuse (2016:161) has never tried to solve the housing question, but instead performs a 'myth of the benevolent state' in acting for all citizens, when in fact the state is simply maintaining the political and economic order; policies from which reproduce the housing question anew (yet for the oppressed, housing is always in crisis). This chapter has gone some way to provide a more nuanced account of the local state historically in Gateshead; whilst conforming to Madden and Marcuse's account of the state at particular moments (as we saw in the reluctance to intervene in poor living conditions in the 1870s), we have also seen attempts to transcend the usual order of things; interventions which have had more positive intentions (such as the village schemes in the 1960s), although not necessarily positive effects. The question of current state intention and intervention in housing is at the heart of this thesis.

Reconsidering Engels' prevailing housing question, and more contemporary works that have come from it has been a useful framework for situating housing development and re-development within various political-economic moments in Bensham and Saltwell. We have seen how housing and land became sites of political power struggles as Gateshead transitioned from medieval ecclesiastical control to an industrial urban setting. Powerful industrialists made claims on common land to house themselves in the face of increased overcrowding, and later gained financially from the development of high-density working class housing. The local authority, once established as such, continued to act as and on behalf of the capitalist class, and were reluctant to intervene in housing conditions, instead seeking to blame the working class for such living conditions in a moralising way. It wasn't until the creation of the welfare state and more centralising policies that shifted local autonomy and as a result reduced political elitism.

Despite varying policy agendas claiming to be localist over the years, they have been rhetorical and hollow and there continues to be a strong central control of the governance of housing. Although we can see degrees of increased autonomy over how central government funding was spent locally at various times, the declining economic conditions of the town has left it reliant on such funding for many years. Most recently central government cuts have forced the local authority to become increasingly self-funding in order to deliver regeneration, and through a perceived lack of alternative, the partnership is taking up this challenge. It is the nature of the GRP, (as the latest proposed solution to the housing question), the way in which it is altering the form of and relations within what is understood to be the local state that is the focus of this thesis: who is now governing housing and how? How are local politics and the public involved in this new form of governing? Whilst the following chapter goes on to establish the theoretical framework to understand such changes, Engels thinking on housing and the state as a solution will be returned to at points throughout the thesis.

3 The State of Housing

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature to establish a theoretical framework for the research. Building on the discussion in Chapter Two that established housing as increasingly central to a contemporary political economy, it sets out to (re)conceptualise the local state as a way through which to understand the contemporary governing of housing. The chapter revisits early Marxian conceptualisations of the local state, but importantly moves beyond these to account for a more relational post-Marxist and alternative theories of the state. The conceptual blending of relatively abstract state theory with a (re)conceptualisation of the local state allows for a more open and fluid examination of the social relations within and beyond the local state, which takes account of both structure and agency. Offering this theoretical framework is important to the contemporary governing of housing as it allows the exploration of the state as an institution and set of relations which are currently undergoing change. It reveals the relations between new and old state actors, politics and people; importantly it further permits us to see who is governing, who has decisive influence in shaping such current arrangement, and also who matters. In doing so, this chapter provides a understanding of the local state in relation to the market (with a specific focus on partnership working), before considering the role/relationship of politics and the public, themes which the thesis goes on to explore through empirical findings.

What is taken from reviewing early conceptualisations of the local state, and wider state theory is that a more fluid and relational understanding of the local state and its powers is required. It is contended that more recent moves within the strategic relational approach (SRA) (Jessop, 2008; 2016), which blends several generations of state theories, may offer the tools to begin to understand such relations. This is understood as moving towards a post-marxist account of the state. In applying this to the local level, a geographically specific and sensitive approach is required which understands both the structural and agentic and discursive practices (Painter and Goodwin 1995; Jessop, 2016). There is

therefore a necessity for empirical investigations to be situated within their spatial and temporal confines, understanding a place at a particular moment - and in relation to its previous historical institutional landscape as well - its local uniqueness. Central-local relations and scales of governing are continually shifting and researching the local state in depth, offers the opportunity to understand such tensions and shifts, particularly at a time of change in the most recent austerity, localism and devolution agendas where local governments are increasingly expected to do more with less (see Peck, 2012; Lowndes and Pratchett 2012; Featherstone et al, 2012). Researching the socio-economic and political relations of the local state is important to reveal the differentiated geographies of local states and development.

3.2 Conceptualising The Local State

There is no single theory of the state at any level, but multiple ways of ontologically and epistemologically understanding what the state is and does. The theoretical framework for this thesis takes leave from a long Marxist tradition of state theorising, and seeks to develop and update conceptualisations of the local state. Although Marx and Engels themselves did not offer a single and succinct theory of the state, many scholars with differing interpretations have developed their writing on this over the years. There was a particular revival of this Marxist interest in the state in the 1970s, which grew out of the perceived success of Keynesian Welfare State in managing capitalism under Fordism (Jessop, 2001) at the time. Fundamentally this work sought to demonstrate that the state was still capitalist, but it was divided theoretically into two main lines of thought. Firstly sociologist Ralph Miliband (1972) advanced the perspective that the state was bound to serve capitalist interest regardless of who controlled it, and acted in the interests of the dominant class and was therefore *a state in a capitalist society*. Secondly, the state was viewed as a rational and calculating subject, which acted in the interests of capital and was therefore *a capitalist state*; its form not easily altered by changing those in power (Poulantzas, 1980). Importantly, both of these views of the state began to move away from functionally analysing the state as unitary object and began to analyse state

power as a complex social relation, and the state itself as an ensemble of institutions (with some traditionally 'non state' institutions). As such the state is understood by Bob Jessop (1990) and others to have 'structural selectivity'; the ability to influence political forces to pursue certain interests through (and beyond) state capacities (Offe, 1972; Poulantzas, 1980).

It is here that Antonio Gramsci's theoretical contribution to state power (rather than a capitalist state in general) is important. For Gramsci the state is inclusive, and not just a set of specific institutions or technical forms of government, but it is linked to society and is therefore viewed in its integral sense to be notoriously defined as 'political society + civil society' (Gramsci, 1971:263). This more open ended and inclusive understanding of the state came alongside the addition that it acts with 'hegemony protected by the armour of coercion' (Gramsci, 1971:263). Here Gramsci uses the concept of hegemony to suggest that states work to gain consent for their legitimacy, whilst disguising their position of dominance, the implication being that they have some degree of political autonomy but also backed up the capacity to enforce authority.

Gramsci's work has influenced much Marxist state theory, particularly that broadly categorised as a regulation approach (RA)¹⁶, which has been one influential mode of understanding the state since 1980s and has continually been developed and adapted by Jessop (2001, 2016, with Sum 2006), Macleod (1997, 1999a, b, 2002) and Painter (1997) amongst others. RA is not a theory per se but a methodological framework or approach (Jessop, 1990; Painter 1991; Goodwin et al 1993, MacLeod 1997) that explains how political, economic and social dynamics vary over time and space¹⁷. Growing from the aim to critique and reorient standard economic models, it is more broadly used to interpret 'a

¹⁶ RA grew out of regulation theory which sought to analyse the *regulation* (in the French sense of processes of social regularization, as well as laws and rules) of institutional forms such as the state which secure capitalisms continued survival contrary to its crisis prone and conflict-ridden character.

¹⁷ A key idea of RA is that periods of stability in capitalism (known as regimes of accumulation) are composed of a structural-coupling between an accumulation system (form of production) and a mode of social regulation (institutions, habits, customs etc). It is this structural coupling that circumvents the potential crisis of capitalism, and has therefore been used to theorise periods of capital expansion such as Fordism and Post-Fordism (Jones, 1998).

number of significant contemporary changes in the political economy of 'advanced' capitalist countries' (Painter and Goodwin, 1995:335), such as that of and within the state. It has therefore been useful in understanding the changing nature of one mode of regulation to another, the hollowing out (Jessop, 2004) and changing scales of the state (Pike and Tomaney, 2009; Jessop, 1997b; Swyngedouw 1997), the rise of entrepreneurialism and privatisation (Peck, 1995; Leitner, 1990) as well as the shift from government to governance (Goodwin et al, 1993; Painter 1997; Mayer, 1994). It has also contributed to understandings of economic relations being socially embedded, a point we will return to later in the chapter.

There is an acceptance, however, even amongst advocates of RA that such an approach is limited in a number of ways. Firstly RA has tended to be economically one-sided (Jessop and Sum, 2006), interpreting politics to be the outcome of economic forces, while also, certainly in its earlier formations, privileging time over space in its aim to categorise periods of capitalist development, which limits distinctly geographical issues (MacLeod and Holden 2009). Furthermore this approach can have a tendency to heighten the causal relationship between centre-local state and 'read off' local transformations from central ones, when Jones (1998:962) considers its strength lies in situating the economy in a macroeconomic and historical context.

Painter and Goodwin (1995) consider that a geographically sensitive approach to RA is required; one that combines a 'critical political sociology of the local state and local governance based on an investigation of the material and discursive practices in which they are grounded' (Painter and Goodwin 1995:347). They therefore call for a series of detailed local case studies that build up an extensive picture and question the organisations involved in local service delivery, the forms of management, relations between local actors and the characteristics of local politics. It is this geographically sensitive, relational understanding of RA which is considered an important theoretical contribution to analysing the local state in this thesis, with the caveat that it remains problematic as a stand-alone approach because of its tendency to rely on macro-economic explanations at the

expense of a detailed understanding of local nuances, relations, politics etc. So whilst the evolution of RA and contributions of work within this field are valuable, a less structural and also more relational approach to conceptualising the local state is required. This includes allowing differentiated conceptualisations of power; not only in an instrumental sense (where power is held over us) also in a more contingent and associational sense of power, that enables specific actions. Any approach must therefore allow for the particularities of different modalities of power (Allen, 2003). Whilst moving away from objectifying the state, however, it remains analytically important to conceptualise what the local state is and what it does in order to analyse its relational powers. The following section therefore considers early moves to conceptualise the local state specifically.

3.2.1 Early conceptualisations of the local state

Debates on the local state arose within the Marxist re-interest in the state in the 1970s mentioned above, particularly around analysing and conceptualising central-local relations of the state, which were under transition at this time. For many years these relations were understood in binary terms; local government was either seen as an arm of central government, or as a more autonomous organisation. Much of these debates reduced analysis to the financial dependence of and control over local government, and there arose a growing call to understand the power relations between these different scales of government (Rhodes, 1980). Cynthia Cockburn (1977a) addressed this central-local relation in her concept of the 'local state' which was informed by an in depth empirical account of changing local government practices in the London Borough of Lambeth. Cockburn sought to reposition the local state, not as an arm of central government, nor alone from it, but a part of the wider capitalist state alongside other local institutions such as the police, courts and functions such as education and housing (Cockburn, 1977b:363).

For Cockburn the local state is made up of multiple organisations, which importantly includes the influence of powerful business interests at a national level, and is both part of the central state and distinct from it. In situating historic

changes to local government at a particular time, principally the rise of corporate management, which introduced new management structures (chief executives, directors, cabinets etc.), Cockburn looks to develop a deeper understanding of the role of the local state in enabling capitalism. That is to ensure conditions of capital accumulation and reproduction, as well as the reproduction of capitalist relations, showing how the local state interacts with the public, which she understood as being institutionalised into the state through various techniques. Despite being made of multiple organisations and functions, the local state for Cockburn ultimately has a basic unity and acts as one to achieve a shared goal, and presents itself as acting in the general interest of a unified public. Resonating rather indirectly with Gramsci, she envisaged this being accomplished through ideology as opposed to oppression 'by inculcating a view of the world to bring about consent through cultural persuasion' (Cockburn, 1977a:57).

Notwithstanding this perceived unity in the state, Cockburn stresses that we must resist seeing it in mechanistic terms, which implies an omnipotent state at work. Instead Cockburn suggests there is a dynamic power relation within the local state that the central state does not have tight control over, but there are struggles over it. Drawing on her case study of Lambeth, and the demand for more public participation Cockburn highlights how the local state tried to seize the initiative through producing 'community' and 'participation' on its own terms, to act or respond at a time when the power relations of the governors to governed were being challenged. Importantly for Cockburn, it is 'the tactics and strategies of the state we most need to understand' (Cockburn, 1977a:103). Such tactics and ideas of a general interest and the use of public persuasion through the participation will be considered more fully in Chapter Seven.

The local state for Cockburn, despite it being seen as 'a kind of human official charity, looking after us 'from cradle to grave' (Cockburn, 1977a:41), is an instrument of class domination, which reproduces capitalism at a local level, but is autonomous to the extent that it doesn't align itself with one bourgeois fraction. Following on from the Marxist theorists Althusser and Poulantzas, Cockburn highlights inherent contradictions in the wider capitalist state: that it

maintains the class system, being controlled by the capitalist class but simultaneously preventing the working class from self identification and action. Here she draws on Ralph Miliband's (1972) conception of electoral democracy and the way in which political party structure is used to legitimise the local state and control the electorate; a concept that will be picked up further in Chapter Six.

Despite Cockburn's warning that the state must not be seen crudely in mechanistic terms, her account of the local state as a pre-existing instrument of the capitalist class within the wider state system has been criticised for being structuralist and deterministic (Duncan and Goodwin, 1982; 1988). It has been accused of not allowing for human agency but instead seeking to produce a model of a local capitalist state, which can be applied to different places. An alternative account of the local state in a capitalist society came from Saunders (1979, 1982, 1986, and with Cawson 1983), who proposed what became termed a 'dual state thesis', which suggested two different political theories for the local and central scales of government. Here the central state is understood to be concerned with processes of production which maintain capitalist interests, and the local state is concerned with consumption. However, unlike Castell's (1976, 1977) theory of urban social movements (which understood local struggles over collective consumption as an important opportunity to form class-based alliances against capital and the state), Saunders (1979) through an empirical account of the London Borough of Croydon, argued the differing socio-political conditions in Britain (as opposed to Castell's French or Italian focus), alongside high levels of home ownership meant that such struggles unfold differently, and do not form such class based alliances. Acknowledging the importance that housing had on the political-economy at the time, Saunders instead draws on Rex and Moore's (1967) alternative housing class theory, which uses housing tenure as the basis for a social classification system, as more appropriate in a British context (as discussed in Chapter Two earlier).

Whilst the dual state theory does allow for the uniqueness of places shaped by different politics, which is arguably lacking in Cockburn's local state, it again rests on rigid divisions and also somewhat prescriptive functions (Duncan and

Goodwin, 1988), when the reality is much more complex. Housing, for example, in the dual state thesis would be understood to be produced for capital accumulation at a national level, but it is actually carried out at local level predominantly, with strong central links (cf Saunders, 1979; Dunleavy, 1984). It also does not account for the regional level of governance and particularly its role in economic development and planning, perhaps a result of the disbanded nature of this tier of governance at the time. The dual state theory therefore is limited in its ability to account for the complex power relations of the central-local state relationship, and it does not attribute autonomy to the local state, but maintains a structuralist relationship between central and local states, determined by production-consumption relations. Although Saunders (1982) later defended this critique by suggesting that his dual state thesis offered an 'ideal type' as a framework, or starting point to guide future empirical studies, it remains in question whether such a structuralist framework is helpful in the study of different localities. Conversely more straightforwardly Weberian inspired 'urban managerialist' approaches to the local state (Dennis, 1970; Rex and Moore 1967; Pahl, 1975) offered a close monitoring of the decision making of urban managers such as planners, housing officers, councillors, as well as of 'extra state' actors like building societies and understood such actors to be controlling state actions. This perspective arguably attributes too much autonomy to such actors, when they are involved more in narrowing the scope of decision making, rather than responsible outright for such decision making (Saunders, 1979; Paris 1983).

Duncan and Goodwin (1982, 1988) understand capitalist states as having developed historically through a process of social relations with more fluid processes than accounts of dominant and subordinate class relations would suggest. Their main thesis is that social relations are unevenly developed over time and space, and have varying local manifestations, which can result in greater or lesser autonomy for local states. This view was supported by a rise in local governments who questioned the central government strategy under Thatcher in what was termed 'local socialism' or the 'new urban left' (Gyford, 1985). Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council is an example of this local

challenge to central government through alternative policies and institutions, which culminated in its abolition by the central state (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988). Such examples of local political action moved to dislocate earlier understandings of the local state being less autonomous in more structural accounts of central-local relations. Such rebellions from the left did not happen in all places, or even similarly, which gives weight to Duncan and Goodwin's (1988) thesis of uneven development and the state. It also supported the argument raised by Paddison (1983) - that whilst the local state has the potential for autonomy, it is not always realised, but that when it is both central and local states can claim legitimacy through their actions in such conflicts. The rise of the new urban left was important in electorally legitimising local government, moving towards an understanding of local democratic and political autonomy. However, earlier work of Duncan and Goodwin (1982) noted that local authority autonomy can also be used to protect the interests of ruling class groups, a contrast which becomes apparent more often in rural rather than urban settings, (often due to land ownership issues, see Cahill, 2011) reminding us of the uniqueness of places, and the problem of attempting to create a 'model' of a local state to be applied universally.

What can be taken from earlier attempts to define and investigate the local state is that there are tensions between empirical and theoretical analysis of it that come about through conflicting understandings of the limitations of both; in seeking to extract theory from empirical accounts of locales and conversely applying rigid theoretical models to specific places. Although Saunders' (1979) empirical account of Croydon and Cockburn's (1977) research on Lambeth did not set out to 'test' theories of the local state, both culminate in generalisations and amplifications of *a local state*. In this way the local state has had a tendency to be reified (Duncan and Goodwin, 1982), and the uniqueness of the *local* state has been stretched to account for an abstract theory of a generalised capitalist local state. Critics such as Boddy and Fudge (1980, cited in Saunders 1982) have therefore questioned the level to which the local state is theoretically specific: for critics, there is something of the sense that such conceptualizations of the local state basically implant a wider Marxist central state theories into a local level.

These literatures highlight the opacity of defining and theorising the local state. What is taken from such debates for the purposes of this research is the importance of rich empirical case studies, which can understand place specific relations and reveal a particular local. Given the on-going central-local state relations and tensions which have been at the heart of debates on state power, there is also a need to nuance how we think about the geographies of power in the local state; taken here to mean a move to see power in a relational sense, focusing on the exercising of power in various ways (Allen, 2003). It is the aim of this remaining chapter to set out a theoretical framework which can aid answering the empirical questions raised, one that reveals the social processes in their local (spatial) and temporal confines, understanding the place at that moment (and in relation to its past) and its local uniqueness. The local state is therefore understood in more fluid and relational terms (Duncan and Goodwin, 1982, 1988) since it takes different forms and is subject to transformations at different times. The following section goes on to argue that despite the critiques of its early conception and a subsequent fall in its use, the local state remains an increasingly important analytic concept (particularly amidst new forms of partnership working), albeit in need of updating.

3.2.2 In partnership with the local state

After a surge of interest in conceptualising the local state, by the 1980s the term was falling out of fashion amongst many scholars who either used the term interchangeably with local government (on this see Rhodes, 1988; Cochrane 1993), or outright rejected it as a term because semantically it was considered to be confusing; implying both local autonomy and central state control (Saunders, 1979; Johnston; 1989). The fall in the use and conceptualisation of the local state coincided with the paradigm shift of government to governance. Following the bureaucratic critique of local government since the 1970s (see DuGay, 2000), there had been an on-going pressure for local governments to become more innovative, outward-looking, and entrepreneurial; in particular, to embrace

partnership working with non-state actors and introduce private sector and market orientated techniques into the public sector. In turn, this became known as New Public Management (Hall, 2003; Laffin, 2016). As the neoliberal agenda took hold at a local level (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) there was said to be a 'hollowing out' of the state (Jessop, 2004) and the idea that a range of state and non-state actors were involved in *governance* as opposed to the formal practices of *government*. The concepts of 'local governance' and 'urban governance' came to replace that of the local state for many scholars (see Harvey, 1989; Goodwin and Painter, 1996; MacLeod, 1999). However, by removing or limiting decision making from political structures such modes of governance raised questions of legitimacy and democratic accountability (Peck 1995). Because of this, the local state as a concept remains important for some scholars. Cochrane (1993:121) for example argues that changes to the welfare state and the rise of entrepreneurial and contractual governance make distinctions between local government and the local state more clear:

'indeed it is probably clearer now that it ever was in the high days of its usage in the 1970s. Not only has there been a mushroom in growth of local state institutions which are not part of (or are loosely related to) elected local governments, but also the ways in which some of these institutions express class and other social relations is also often rather transparent.'

It is the inclusion of business in governance and partnership working - such as aforementioned Urban Development Corporations - that Cochrane refers to here as the mushrooming of local state institutions. The shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism was documented and analysed by many scholars, through notions of 'local boosterism', 'place marketing' and 'growth coalitions' and 'urban privatism'¹⁸, with a growing interest in how this was transforming the local state (Harvey, 1989; Leitner, 1990; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Jones, 1998; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999b; MacLeod, 2011) and also through notions of 'common sense' and 'good governance' (Harvey 2005; Paddison, 2009).

¹⁸ Urban Privatism is described as 'an underlying confidence in the capacity of the private sector to create the conditions for personal and community prosperity' (Barnekov et al, 1989: vii)

For Jamie Peck the various forms of partnership organisations - urban development corporations, enterprise trusts, regional development agencies and training and enterprise council - were eclipsing elected councillors and themselves becoming agencies of what appeared to be mutating into an unelected state: one where “business interests’ are currently being mobilized, given their form and presented with their function *by the state*’ (Peck, 1995:17, original emphasis), through processes including that of ‘contracting out’. In tracing neoliberal business practices through the decades Peck notes that by end of the 1980s central government intervention had been replaced with networks of pseudo-markets controlled by a modestly authoritarian central state, allied with centrally-orchestrated local elites, giving rise to the idea of centrally orchestrated localism (ibid; Jones, 1998). In this context, then, far from being ‘rolled back’ in accordance with the ideals of neoliberal philosophy, the state form and its functioning were being redefined and the state’s interface with the private sector restructured.

However, for Peck this is not a return to understanding the local state as an instrument of capital (cf. Peterson, 1981, Harvey, 1985; Mollenkopf, 1983). It is in this context that the work of Helga Leitner (1990) is extremely illuminating in revealing how the influence of business interests (or indeed any other interests) can not be ‘read off’ from the social structure of a capitalist society, as we saw earlier in relation to arguments of central-local state. For scholars like Leitner and Peck, the influence of the pro-business agenda on the state varies across time and space, and a local specific understanding is required, which is influenced by wider and non-local economic and political pressures (see also Harvey 1989). Drawing her inspiration from the fast-changing context of municipal government in the USA¹⁹, Leitner contends that the growing dependency of the local state on its tax base was offering even more power to business elites to influence growth promoting urban development policies. Although fiscal stress was often cited to be behind such strategies (Peterson, 1981), Leitner suggests that this doesn’t

¹⁹ In considering the two case studies of San Francisco and Minneapolis Leitner (1990) highlights local differences in formulating and pursuing economic development policies; the former being concerned with overgrowth and issues of control, and the latter seeking to stimulate growth.

account for local differences, but a closer analysis of local context, historic development and political cultures, alongside the wider political economy is required, a perspective that I build upon in this thesis.

Irrespective of local difference, Leitner goes on to show how the completion of development projects themselves act as a symbol of success of the state (i.e. for officers and politicians) and growth therefore becomes self legitimising, further fuelling the pro-growth agenda, and the collective action of such partnerships. The success of such development projects therefore becomes of political importance to the state, and it commits more funds to ensure its success: 'the harder the local state tries to defray the risks of private investors, the more it assumes responsibility for these risks itself' (Leitner, 1990:160). Harvey (1985) argues that such coalitions present themselves as custodians of local economic and social conditions, manipulating loyalty to place in order to gain support from residents whose interest development is not necessarily in.

So for Leitner (1990) the growth of business activity is understood as a restructuring of the local state, which Peck (1995) advances in understanding business elites being incorporated into the political process by the state, not simply a paradigm shift, but a restructuring of the local state apparatus: a drafting of business into the state. Partnerships in particular should be seen as part of - and indeed constitutive of - a 'reorientated state apparatus' (Peck 1995:36); crucially one which reprioritises market requirements above social redistribution (Cochrane, 1993; Peck 1995). This is a point that Mike Raco (2013) explores in detail through his investigation of Private Finance Initiatives (PFI), which sees private companies undertaking state-funded tasks under long term and inflexible contracts, which increasingly removes control and democratic processes from the state. Whilst urban privatisation and partnerships are understood to be transforming politics and policy (Peck 1995, MacLeod 1999, Raco, 2013) and the public realm (Minton, 2012; MacLeod 2011), Peck and Tickell (2002) push their conceptualisation of the business agenda further to suggest that such forms of governance are not agents of market rule which replace a rolled-back state, but are part of a remodelled state.

Importantly within this, the political power of business elites is not autonomous; rather, and drawing on Offe's (1975) classic work, this power is 'licensed' by the state - 'it is the *power of institutional position*' (Peck, 1995:42). That is not to say that there is a strategic political programme or ideology at play: rather, as Peck (1995) suggests, partnerships tend to be fragile and 'organizationally weak, internally divided and rarely capable of sustaining a political programme' (Peck, 1995:42). Political power within such partnerships - and thereby the state itself - is therefore understood as having the potential to be authoritative, through instrumental power - as a direct instrument of capitalism as Cockburn suggests - but this should not be an assumption. Instead, as we saw earlier, a more nuanced account of power through such partnerships and their relations should be considered, which takes account of various modalities of power being contingently realised.

Amongst Peck's valuable contribution, it is important to remember that there are different types of partnerships which have differing ideologies: some are delineated for example by the processes and motives by which they are constructed such as seeking to combine assets collectively to achieve greater budget enlargement or innovative learning (Mackintosh, 1992). Others are 'defensive' where partnerships are required to survive a particular moment, or 'offensive' where they seek to provide things beyond its current capacity, or 'shotgun' where partnership is enforced (Harding 1998). Understanding the processes and drivers of partnership is key to understanding their actions and social relations. Research is required which understands the co-produced knowledge and systems and the relations within it to reveal the politics and agency in decision making (Parker and Street, forthcoming, 2017). It is the aim of this thesis to examine the business practices between and within the state, their complexities and fluctuating nature (Peck, 1995) and the relations within them, considering that they do not all act in the same way, as is often suggested (Heneberry and Parris, 2013), and unfold differently in relation to different local states. Using housing development as a way to examine such practices, this is particularly important to consider under the recent austerity and localism

programmes (see Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012; Featherstone et al 2011) that increasingly appear to call for a smaller state under further rolling privatisation.

I argue that the local state is an increasingly significant concept to understand changes within a contemporary political economy, and the rise of public-private partnership working is of particular importance to understanding the concept of the local state and the changes to it. However, the earlier Marxists conceptualisations are limited in their application of both empirical and theoretical accounts of *a local state* as we saw earlier. Therefore, building on the rich material discussed in this section, which situates the rise of business and partnerships within the local state, the following section seeks to build up a theoretical framework that incorporates a more open and relational understanding of a contemporary local state. It begins by reviewing some on-going contributions to wider state theory.

3.2.3 Re-conceptualising the Local State: Blending State Theory

Philosopher Michel Foucault offers an alternative and hugely influential approach to state theory, precisely by not offering a theory of the state but instead positing that 'the state does not have an essence' (Foucault, 2008 [1979]:77). Foucault therefore rejects neo-statist (Evans et al, 1985) and Marxist views of the state, considering them to be essentialist and deductive; preoccupied with the hierarchical form of the state apparatus and unified power (Jessop, 2001). In contrast, Foucault's notion of governmentality considers the links between different levels of the state and global politics as well as the individual and their conduct in every day life (Danaher et al, 2000). Linked to Foucault's understanding of power as less of a thing and more of a complex flow and set of relations, governmentality is as much about how we govern ourselves as how we are governed. Within this, and differing from Gramsci's understanding of the state consisting of both political society and civil society within a coercive hegemony, Foucault understood the state (and its intervention/regulation) as producing the need for civil society; moving concerns over ethical and moral

conduct from the state onto the public. Foucauldian approaches to the state therefore attribute more emphasis to dispersed forms of power at various levels than the Marxian emphasis on macro-political struggles and strategies.

From such a perspective, the state is regarded as a site of statecraft within which the art of government occurs. Power for Foucault is not concentrated in the state - as an autonomous source of power, but instead it is ever-present and permeates every social relation (Foucault 2008 [1979]). Foucault moves away from considering who has power to consider the emergence of rationality; the 'reason of the state' (Danaher et al, 2000: 89) with a primary focus on how power is exercised. Maintaining the well-being and prosperity of the state thereby produces certain types of knowledge and techniques, which Foucault calls 'apparatus'²⁰, although it should be noted that this may differ from the Marxian understanding of the state apparatus²¹. For Foucault, the various techniques and power relations are not held within the state itself, but extend beyond it, and hence he rejects the study of the state in isolation.

Whilst acknowledging this theoretical contribution to state theory, Jessop (2001) argues that Foucault's understanding of power reduces it to a universal technique that does not account for class and patriarchal relations with state and power. The juridical and bureaucratic workings of the modern state are understood to be neglected (cf. Poulantzas, 1978), in favour of a more relational understanding of power that is not concentrated within the state. So whilst neo-Marxian and neo-Gramscian approaches focus on the powers of the state and are accused of reifying the state, a neo-Foucauldian perspective which stresses the autonomy of political discourses and technologies can be understood to neglect social and economic relations and have a tendency to reify power itself (Poulantzas, 1978).

²⁰ Foucault uses *dispositif* and *appareil*, which have both been translated into the English 'apparatus', although not without disagreement amongst scholars. Bussolini (2010) traced the etymology of the words, and attributes *dispositif* more inline with the practices and action of knowledge of power, whereas *appareil* is more of a solid thing or structure.

²¹ The Conference of Socialist Economists: State Apparatus and Expenditure Group (1979) define state apparatus as being a set of physical and administrative institutions.

Despite the fundamental differences between neo-Gramscian and neo-Foucauldian perspectives, it is acknowledged by some that there are 'hidden parallels' (Jessop, 1990:229) between the two. There are numerous attempts to bring these two perspectives into dialogue in considering how the state is actively constructed as a political project, and power is understood as contingent. Drawing on earlier neo-Gramscian work which considered how governance was channelled through local state institutions (Jones, 1997; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999, a, b), Danny MacKinnon (2000) adds to this a neo-Foucauldian understanding of the technologies of government to explain the shift from regulatory government to governance as a neo-liberal project which 'de-socialised' economic government. Through an empirical investigation of local economic development in the Scottish Highlands, MacKinnon argues that specific forms of new public management can be understood as managerial technologies²². MacKinnon's contribution is important because it offers the potential to bring together relations of government technologies with pre-existing institutional norms and practices, and 'by unsettling and de-naturalising the operation of contemporary regimes of power in this way, neo-Foucauldian analysis can add critical depth to studies of sub-national governance.' (MacKinnon, 2000:311).

It is this combining of theoretical approaches²³ that is considered an important move in conceptualising the contemporary local state; particularly a broader and more open understanding of power and the state as a social relation. This is something that Bob Jessop's work has increasingly moved towards in a strategic-relational (SRA) approach to the state. Building on - but moving beyond - the RA, Jessop blends or borrows from other theoretical perspectives such as Offe, Poulantzas, neo-Gramscian and neo-Foucauldian, shifting analysis from the state

²² MacKinnon (2000) reveals that the political project of neo-liberalism is not unified or coherent (he notes that neo-Foucauldian conceptualisations of political projects have a tendency to over-emphasise cohesion), but instead there is a contradictory re-centralising effect, (inline with Jessops (1997b) findings), with functions being de-centralised, without the corresponding power (found also by MacLeod and Goodwin 1999b).

²³ Another approach to combining theories of the state is Joe Painter's (2006) development of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of prosaics, which he uses to move away from structuralist approaches to consider the mundane, everyday actions of the state to 'highlight the openness, porosity, heterogeneity, fallibility, unevenness and creativity of state practices' (Painter, 2006:770).

to state power (see Jessop, 1990, 2006, 2016). A fixed definition of the state is not provided, instead it is seen as more fluid and relational; considered to be underdetermined but simultaneously still relied upon to provide some measure of unity and strategic guidance (MacLeod and Holden 2009). Jessop distinguishes between Offe's concept of 'structural selectivity' which foregrounds the power of an agent (i.e. business) as structurally inscribed, and 'strategic selectivity' whereby power is inscribed by strategic manoeuvres, with more emphasis on relations. SRA itself has developed through several waves which is not considered necessary to review in detail here (for detail see Jessop, 2008; 2016) but because it maintains a basis in a Marxian perspective of the state, and its grounding in critical realism²⁴ (Painter, 2006) therefore maintains the criticisms that it lacks agency or free will, lacks concern with the possibility of political or systematic transformation and is understood to be capitalist to a degree (Kelly, 1999). However, it is contended here that Jessop's work has increasingly moved away from such one-sided approaches to the state and more reductionist Marxist tendencies.

More Recently, Jessop (2016) maintains that the state is a complex institutional ensemble (amongst other ensembles), and site of political practice, with its own mode of calculation and procedures. As an 'emergent, partial and unstable' (Jessop 2008:78) ensemble, the state does not - and can not - exercise unified power, but there exists complex social relations within and beyond the state whereby individuals such as politicians and officers do exercise power (and are in turn shaped by it). The strategic element accounts for the shift towards a more Foucauldian understanding of these social relations working through (both in and beyond) the state, alongside a dependency on structural ties (such as political systems and networks). In a blended approach therefore Jessop (2016) argues that the state should be analysed in terms of its power relations, both institutionally and discursively to reveal changing balances of power and an understanding of the form, purpose and content of polity, politics and policy. This more updated SRA therefore re-examines structure and agency in seeking to

²⁴ Critical realism is a philosophical approach that argues against positivism and constructivism in combining the philosophy of science with the philosophy of social science and critical thought.

reveal how actors navigate structure in relation to specific strategies or other forces. Whilst the state ensemble has structural and strategic selectivity which is applied through governmental technologies, it also has liabilities and the effectiveness of state projects is dependant on forces both within and beyond state boundaries, as well as specific temporalities and the evolution of selected strategies and tactics.

At the same time Jessop recognises the paradox that whilst the state is an institutional ensemble among others within society, it is simultaneously charged with overall responsibility in managing the interdependence of other institutional ensembles. The state therefore remains both part of, and all of society, making collectively binding decisions within the confines of its institutions, organisations and procedures, much of which is beyond its total control. In a more Gramscian influenced understanding, the state maintains the idea of being concerned with the general interest of a heterogeneous society; being the site of an 'illusionary community' and ideology.

What can be taken from recent developments of the SRA when examining the local state is the openness and fluidity in its conceptualisation; understanding the local state as an emergent, partial and unstable ensemble which is part of an increasingly complex social and economic order, and allows the blending of alternative but complementary theories of the state. Taking up Jessop's (2008, 2016) call to find useful theoretical and methodological tools to study the changing form, function and effect of the state, this thesis aims to provide a historically and geographically specific use of SRA to the local state which takes account of geographical complexities and uneven development; the way in which national state projects are societalised in local contexts (Jones, 1998). Whilst Jessop often provides more abstract theoretical accounts of the state, this research is grounded in empirical research, but attempts to frame such findings through the application of a SRA-based approach, thereby developing through grounding Jessop's most recent work.

What is important to note is that the functions of the local state, and level of power and autonomy within this fluctuate over time and space, and Duncan and Goodwin's (1988) uneven development thesis is ever present. National state projects are understood through SRA to be societalised in different local contexts (through pre-existing institutional conditions), which therefore repeats such cycles of uneven development geographically. The fluctuating central-local relations reveal various ideological approaches to governing and the role of the state. The realisation of the various ways in which decision making and power (state projects) occurs is, according to Jessop (2016) dependant on the relationship between state managers, political forces and social networks.

The local state is therefore understood in more fluid and relational terms (Duncan and Goodwin, 1982, 1988; Jessop 2008, 2016) since it takes different forms and is subject to transformations at different times depending on various factors; economic, political and societal. The remainder of the chapter will consider these factors in turn, in relation to the local state's relationship with housing, which as we saw in Chapter 2, has changed over time.

3.3 The Local State and Market Relations

Property and land were central in the original formation of the English (and later British) state, whereby property rights and political authority were both allocated and protected (Lachmann, 2010). The acquisition, protection and exchange of property and land have always since been regulated by the state, and continue to be 'foundational to both power and wealth' (Aalbers and Christophers, 2014:373). By focusing on housing as a specific type of property, it is important to understand the way in which the state has in recent history transformed its role in housing and understood it less as a form of shelter, and more as a market (Malpass, 2005). Indeed it is no exaggeration to suggest that housing has become so tightly bound with national economic stability that the preservation of the housing market has become a major political concern. This thesis looks to examine the way in which housing is often understood quite

separately in economic terms as a market as well as in policy terms. In doing so, it takes up the call of Aalbers and Christophers (2014) to conceptualise housing vis-à-vis contemporary capitalist political economy, and, in more specific terms to analyse the relationship between the housing market and the local state. The following sections therefore build on the earlier reconceptualization of the local state to more closely consider the relationship of the market and the state more widely. It will then consider how the housing market is bound up with the state in increasing ways, conceptually and practically.

3.3.1 The Market and The State: Embedded and Socially Constructed

A market is more than ‘a place of exchange’ as dictionary definitions suggest: for it requires actors within it, rules to operate within and ‘things’ to be exchanged in order for it to exist as a market. In this expanded understanding, markets are therefore social constructions that are actively made. There are a range of actors, activities, strategies and discourses involved in the construction and running of markets generally. Whilst no one person or organization can be in over all charge of a market (or else it would fail to be a market and would instead be a planned economy), the state has historically underpinned markets to varying degrees. In the context of more modern market economies the state has a role in providing goods and services that markets would not supply or would undersupply (what economists call ‘public goods’), and cannot therefore be left to market supply alone. This includes many of the services delivered as the ‘welfare state’ and as ‘collective consumption’ (Castells, 1977; Merrifield, 2014), but also by acting in the background as market rule-setter and regulator. The ideal scope of involvement of the state in markets is contentious and it is bound up in conflicting ideologies of the state, the economy and redistribution, as we briefly saw earlier. There exists a tension between the state and the market. Whilst the two are entwined, markets have a polarising effect: revered by some as a source of liberation and prosperity, yet reviled by others as a source of exploitation and poverty. For McMillan (2002:13) markets ‘are the most potent antipoverty engine there is – but only where they work well. The caveat is crucial’. For many

‘working well’ requires state regulation not only to succeed in economic terms, but by preventing inequality (Dorling, 2014).

Despite the work that is involved in the active construction of markets²⁵, there remains a myth that markets are natural and spontaneous, even supernatural and magical (McMillan 2002; Christophers 2015a); a view that economic theory had done little to dispel until recently when economic theorists began to set out basic principles for ‘designing’ markets²⁶. This so-called *business* of market design (Christophers, 2015a) has raised concerns amongst social scientists that economists therefore perform, shape and format the economy as opposed to analysing how it works (Callon, 1998). Economists have therefore been said to be ‘performative’ in their application of theory into practice, ‘contribut[ing] to the construction of the reality that it describes’ (Callon, 2007: 316). This process has been seen by some as economic social engineering (Santos, 2011). Without considering this debate here at length, this performativity critique is helpful in seeking to highlight that market construction itself is highly political and power laden (Christophers, 2015a). Whilst economic theorist John McMillan (2002) considers that designing a market does not control what happens in it, but merely shapes and supports the process of exchange, Christophers (2015a) argues that the work involved in their making is material to the market, and not only shapes it, but is embedded within it.

This is an important distinction to make in understanding markets as socio-political constructions. There is a body of work which examines the social construction of markets, notably Callon (1998) seeks to understand the anthropology of markets²⁷ and Abolafia (1998) interprets markets as cultures;

²⁵ There are multiple markets and referring to *the market* is an abstraction arising from the interaction of many markets (McMillan, 2002:6).

²⁶ George Akerlof, Michael Spence and Joseph Stiglitz won a Nobel Prize for such work in 2001. Their individual and earlier work had been brought together to produce a general theory of markets with asymmetric information; how different market actors have different (unequal) information and achieve mechanisms to share and exploit such information- to design and manage market activity (McMillan, 2002).

²⁷ For Callon (1998) looking at the anthropology of markets avoids making a choice between revering or reviling the market, which he considers social scientists can fall foul of in trying to give agency to an economic agent and by denouncing political economy as abstract and deductive.

through ethnographic investigations on the stock market, markets are seen as socially embedded in a network of social relations, with a meaning system of norms, understandings and rules. A theoretical turn in planning studies which understood the housing market to be a social construction (Healey, 2006) is considered further below. It is within these understandings and drawing on the thought of Polanyi, that Peck (2012), Christophers (2015a) and others have called for geographers to better understand markets (beyond production relations) through ethnographic research. Areas of study which have already interested or concerned geographers around the impact of markets can be found in critiques of 'neoliberalisation', 'commodification' and 'marketization', the usefulness of such critiques in relation to understanding the local state will be considered later. First it might be timely here to consider in specific terms the socio-political construction of the housing market.

3.3.2 Housing market: a socio-political construction

Advancing the concept of market as social construction with actors embedded in them, was a theoretical turn in planning studies which viewed the property market as a social construction, with planners embedded in it as market actors, not separate from the market (see Healy 1998). This was understood as an opportunity for planning professionals to influence the market:

'If market behavior is itself 'socially constructed' by the active work of networks of actors in the development and investment process, then planning policy has the opportunity to play a role in [...] an explicit strategy for molding the institutional capabilities of the development industry in a locality.'

(Healey, 2006: 158, 151)

Although the market and the state are intertwined as we have seen, the realisation of local state agency within this, understood by Healey as an opportunity, could also bring with it an uneven power relation. This is particularly the case in the state designation of (and subsequent intervention in) failing housing markets (see Couch et al, 2015). This was the case in Housing Market Renewal (HMR), where Bramley and Pawson (2002) considered low and falling demand to be a growing problem arising from economic decline and

demographic changes in the north of England during the later 1990s. Therefore a 'thinning out' of housing stock was recommended to restructure the housing market. However, others have shown that the discourse of regeneration became less about low demand (understood as housing market failure) and more about the need for the renewal of housing stock to provide better quality housing for the growing middle class (Cameron, 2003; Allen, 2008). It was therefore understood as a form of state-led gentrification as we saw in Chapter Two.

Developing understandings of housing market rational and the construction of 'market failure' under HMR, Webb (2010), through discourse analysis, reveals a state rationality based on neo-classical market understandings (which focus on normative supply and demand) by 'responding to and anticipating market change' (Cole and Nevin, 2004: xi). Brendan Nevin, an influential academic advocate of HMR, reveals this understanding as follows:

'The last phase of interventions which significantly changed the supply of property within the older urban areas occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. These changes in housing markets were led by the public sector and were driven by the aims to improve housing standards and public health. In contrast, this phase of restructuring is being led by changes in consumer demand. The public sector is not, therefore, currently facilitating this change; rather it is assembling a framework to manage the transformation in some areas where the processes have already reached a stage of maturation.'

(Nevin, 2001, cited in Couch et al, 2015: 464)

Housing is thereby viewed as a consumer product within sub regional markets. Here the state is positioned as reactively managing changes with the emphasis on the process of decline as already established, rather than facilitators of intervention. However, Webb (2010) identifies how certain (cheap) housing in certain (worst) neighbourhoods is problematized in a way that does not account for alternative understandings of housing; cultural, historical, political or institutional. In forecasting neighbourhoods to deteriorate, Webb claims HMR adopted a *neighbourhood decline discourse* which makes low-return housing a problem, associating it with low demand, and the *risk* of abandonment, and market collapse (see also Couch, 2016). Importantly the use of 'scientific

evidence' produced by 'experts' led to a causal link being drawn between economic growth and declining popularity of low income housing, which led to a 'theoretical jump' (Webb 2010:318); made possible by the conceptualisation of society in market terms. A closer examination of the use of experts and evidence in the designation of Bensham and Saltwell as a failed housing market area will be considered in Chapter Five. The following section will consider how housing (and the role of the state) has been opened up to market logics, which require careful consideration of such social construction.

3.3.3 Housing Marketization/Financialization

As we have seen, the market-orientated policies of a series of successive governments was understood to result in a shift in power and resources from the state to the market (Peck, 1995; Hall et al, 2015) while also encouraging private capital (through state actors) to hollow-out the welfare state and dismantle structures of the wider state (Jessop, 2002; Peck, 2012). Understood as the neoliberal programme, which constructs 'free markets' to contest Keynesian economics (Harvey, 2005), the neoliberal practice often differs from such theory (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Despite witnessing a roll back of the state to free markets and increased privatisation, the state and the market do not exist in a zero-sum relationship (Peck, 2012), and the cutting back of the state does not necessarily result in some unbridled 'freedom' of the market. Peck (2010; 2012) has traced the practical implementation of the neoliberal project since the 1970s – while also tracing its intellectual and ideational moments back to the 1930s – and notes that it does not follow a linear progression, but instead has moments of roll back deregulation, and dismantling of the state, as was witnessed in the 1980s, which promotes later 'roll out' responses of the state such as pro-market regulation and short-term intervention which occurred in the 1990s (see Peck and Tickell 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck, 2012).

This was the pattern that we saw with housing in Chapter Two; the privatisation of Right to Buy and deregulation of lending in the early 1980s, leading to a later

roll out of central state regeneration and wider intervention schemes. This is the contradiction in neoliberalism; the market is understood to surpass the state's ability to govern (Lave et al 2010). However whilst this has become an accepted understanding within the state itself, the non-linear trajectory of neoliberalism shows the inability of the market to fully surpass the state, but ironically results in re-centralising and increased regulation and intervention (Jessop, 1997b; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999b). And yet 'The Market (suitably re-engineered and promoted) can always provide solutions seemingly caused by *the market* in the first place' (Lave et al, 2010:663); in the wake of the great recession of the late 2000s and amid the onset of austerity, this is what Colin Crouch (2011) refers to as the 'strange non-death of neoliberalism'. It can be seen in recent central government's responses to housing that are confined to market frameworks (despite a perceived crisis in affordability and housing precarity), through the introduction of various market mechanisms and incentives, the most recent including the Get Britain Building programme (2011), Help to Buy scheme (2013) and Build to Rent (2014), all of which include state loans and/or equity funds to developers and home owners.

The state has therefore been said to promote a 'winner takes all capitalism' through its housing policy, with real estate and financial services becoming 'predatory' (Glynn, 2009:33) in their wealth creation; developers being more involved with finance capital rather than productive capital through processes such as land banking as opposed to delivering housing²⁸, but all proceeding with a growing dependence on the state and its specific selectivities (Jessop, 2016). Such changes in public sector services can be understood as a wider practice of marketization; the process of exposing services to markets. But for Aalbers (2016), changes to the housing system (which has always had links to the private market) are conceptualised more specifically as financialization, which he defines as follows:

²⁸ Many academics are drawing on Naomi Klein's (2007) notion of 'disaster capitalism' where political and corporate leaders profit out of a crisis to describe the current housing situation (see Dorling, 2015; Glynn 2009, Allen and Crooks, 2009).

‘The increasing dominance of financial actors, markets, practices, measurements and narratives, at various scales, resulting in a structural transformation of economies, firms (including financial institutions), states and households’.

(Aalbers, 2016:2)

There is an increasing amount of work within geography which looks to the process of financialization (Clark and O’Connor, 1997; Martin, 1999; French & Leyshon 2004; Tickell, 2000; Amin, 2003; Harvey, 2003), although this predominantly has a particular focus on macro-economics (Brenner, 2002, Dumenil and Levy, 2004). There is a relatively smaller amount of work which aims specifically to investigate the understanding of local government/local state interaction with financial markets. Particular examples are Rachel Weber (2010) who examines the financialization of urban redevelopment policy in a US context, Peck and Whiteside (2015) who focus on the financialization of US urban governance more broadly, and Beswick and Penny (2017) who consider the use of housing for financial extraction in London. Such studies foreground the role of local government and broader local state in shaping and being shaped by financial markets. Whilst Mike Raco’s (2013a) work on PFI in a UK context helps appreciate the increased role of finance and financial actors in governing of the local state, the focus there is more on the process of privatization, as opposed to financialization, which is an important distinction to make in terms of where power/agency lies.

Through the example of Chicago city, Weber (2010) reveals how the local government have actively harnessed the power of financial markets and facilitated capital switching through Tax Increment Financing (TIF); a process wherein the expected increase in property value and taxes in areas (designated as blighted) are converted into bonds and sold to pay for their redevelopment, thereby becoming an agent in gentrification. Crucially here it is not just the housing being commodified, ‘but the ability of the local state to control development’ (ibid 253) that is being priced and valued. The local state was therefore an active agent in channelling capital into real estate. Similarly Peck and Whiteside (2015) note that ‘bets are being placed’ on the renewal of ageing urban stock of public infrastructure, a key point of financial expansion and

experimentation. The vehicles for financialization are often public-private partnerships, according to Peck and Whiteside (2015), through processes of long term contracts, complex risk sharing and financing of what was public services or assets. A key attribute of financialization for both Weber (2010) and Peck and Whiteside (2015), (alongside deregulation and economic integration) is increased risks, which are understood to be institutionalised. When a local government accepts risks associated with financialization, it compromises its ability to function in the provision of certain functions (Weber, 2010). This management of risk, and financial engineering, or creative accounting is for Peck (2017a, b) symptomatic of late-entrepreneurial urbanism, a point which we will return to.

Here it is pertinent to return to Leitner's (1990) work which outlined that local governments were not just performing in entrepreneurial ways, but were embedding the logics of finance, business and competition; 'in a sense, city agencies have learned to imitate the outlook and financial practices of the private sector' (Leitner 1990: 149). Importantly for Weber (2010) the local state are active agents of financialization, yet Peck and Whiteside (2015) consider this not to be of their choosing, which is a point we will again return to in Chapter Five. Irrespective of the arguments on agency, financialization is understood to occur in a slow growth environment, with an intensification of deep-rooted changes that the financial crash exposed and sped up. Whilst particular attention is drawn to the depth and systemic processes of financialization (Peck and Whiteside, 2015), importantly this does not unfold evenly across time and space, and it is important to understand the 'variegated and locally embedded' (Weber, 2010: 253) nature of the local state's financialization.

It is also worth noting that there is an emerging critique of the academic turn towards the widespread use of financialization, and particularly a caution that the process should not necessarily be seen as new, but is more likely an acceleration of Harvey's capital switching (Aalbers, 2008, 2016; Christophers, 2015b), and subsequent work on entrepreneurialism (for example Peck, 1995, Leitner, 1990). That is not to say that financialization is not a useful optic, but

importantly there are limits to the term, both conceptually, analytically and empirically which are born out of an ambiguity of the meaning, and an abstraction which limits spatial and temporal relations to it (a similar critique to that which we saw in neoliberalism in Chapter Three). Christophers (2015b) in particular calls for caution in the use and application of what has become a buzzword. Importantly for Christophers (2015b), it should be used cautiously and understood as an open-ended process that is analytically fluid and flexible. When used empirically it must be clear what is meant by the term; what exactly it is we are talking about, and perhaps the more mundane and small changes should be appreciated (Langley, 2008). Importantly financialization should not be understood as a monolithic force, but as evolving and constantly changing.

Differing from the opening up of housing to the private market that we saw earlier, Aalbers (2016) argues that states (and semi-public institutions) are becoming increasingly dependent on financial markets and actors, but importantly are also often the drivers of such processes. This is understood as the financialization '*of and through the state*' (ibid:4). In the case of housing, the state's traditional social responsibilities in regulating the housing market (at a national level) and safeguarding people in housing (at a local level) are increasingly being transferred 'either actively or passively, to financial actors and financial markets' (ibid: 4). This distinction between active and passive is an important one when analysing social relations and agency/autonomy of the local state.

The period of entrepreneurial governance has seen local governments becoming not just the beneficiaries of capital switching, but agents of it through financialization, particularly into real estate where liquid markets and local policy liberalization allowed the private sector to build increasingly larger and riskier projects (Weber, 2010; Raco, 2013a). A significant amount of research has been carried out on local government indebtedness and credit (Hackworth, 2007), and the effects of this (Tickell, 2000). Debt management is now understood to have over taken growth management, with Peck and Whiteside (2015) signaling a 'debt-machine', shifting power from local business elite to

global finance markets, which they consider moves into a phase of later (or even post) entrepreneurial governance. Conversely, emerging research in London suggests a shift in governing logic towards the local state having a stronger intervention in the financialization of housing; as a active initiator of financial extraction (Beswick and Penny, 2017). Chapter Five considers the process of financialization within the local state further, and the usefulness of it as an optic.

There is not therefore a straightforward shift to the 'free market' through marketization or privatisation, as the neoliberal discourse is sometimes at risk of suggesting (see for example Hall et al, 2015). Whilst the advancement of market-logic through privatisation and marketization is not in dispute, there is arguably not a consistent practice of such a market ideology. This is what MacKinnon (2000) found in his blended - neo-Foucauldian and neo-Gramscian - approach to the consideration of internal state practices; the political project of neo-liberalism is not unified or coherent²⁹. Therefore the wider discourse of neoliberalism (and other related terms, as we will go on to see) can limit the way in which we understand the relationship between the market and the state. It is therefore considered appropriate to move away from viewing strategic market ideologies and alternatively view the market as a social construction, which gives less agency to 'the market' itself, shifting analysis onto the actors and institutions that constitute it. The housing market in particular is understood to be undergoing a complex restructuring, and this research follows Aalbers (2016) call for more research on the financialization of and through the state, together with Aalbers and Christophers (2014) demand to situate housing in political economy. For Aalbers (2017) housing financialization is often overlooked in debates on financialization, and the nexus is of financialization and the state is 'one of the research frontiers to be pushed in the coming years.' (ibid:10).

Importantly such local state reforms are, according to Peck (2012:630) 'interlaced with deep-seated political motivations', and often such relations and wider questions of power are neglected in methodological and theoretical

²⁹ MacKinnon (2000) notes that neo-Foucauldian conceptualisations of political projects have a tendency to over-emphasise cohesion.

frameworks which consider networks in development (see for example Henneberry and Parris; (2013) 'project economy'³⁰). This is something that Jessop's (2016) SRA can offer to discussions on financialization of and through the state. The following sections turn to understanding the politics of and within the local state.

3.4 Politics of the Local State

Local government has traditionally been tasked with balancing its institutional role; as that of a service provider (Paddison, 1983) with its constitutional role; as a 'vital and integral part of democracy' (Hill, 1974:20). The balancing and expectations of these roles are often problematic (O'Connor, 1973), particularly with fluctuating scales of power. The role of politics and representation in local government was considered through a swathe of local case studies in the 1970s. These looked at the inner political and administrative structures of local government at the time (for example Budge et al, 1972 on Glasgow; Davies, 1972 on Newcastle; Dennis, 1972 on Sunderland; Dearlove, 1973 on Kensington and Chelsea etc.). However in line with the move to understand the local state relationally, such earlier work was considered to be limited in centring political processes to the exclusion of social and economic environments (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988). Instead it was suggested that research should focus on how places develop specific social formations, and how 'the spatial constitution of society affects its political formations, especially at a local level' (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988:16). In other words studying the socio-economic and political relations of the local state reveal the differentiated geographies of local states and development. This analysis of the local state is discussed further in Chapter

³⁰ Henneberry and Parris (2013) offer the theoretical and methodological framework of 'project economy' (developed by Grabher, 2002) to interrogate and analyse networks in local development through empirically observing networks through interviews with specific actors in them. This process looks not just at structures and networks, but the process of partnerships, and the heterogeneity of the development process. Whilst this approach is useful in considering the specifics of how partnerships work, a detailed focus on specific projects focuses only on specific actors involved in them, and negates those who are not, or arguably should be involved. For instance, Henneberry and Parris (2013) in their case study of a partnership project do not mention the public or local politics as either forming part of the network, or critically being missing from it.

Six. The following section will consider more broadly the role of politics in the local state; specifically focusing on political representation, autonomy and the post-political debate.

3.4.1 Local Political representation and autonomy

As we saw earlier within central-local state debates, the question of local state autonomy is often disputed, particularly within shifting modes of governing. Despite examples of local political resistance under the new urban left (Gyford, 1985; Duncan & Goodwin 1988) and the democratically elected local political system, fundamentally, the institutional system of local government is subordinate to central government in a number of ways. For example central government determine/guide policy and decision-making, control tax generation, and spending and provide financial support through grants and other mechanisms. This dependence and control of the institutional framework raises questions over the autonomy of the political framework and particularly of democratic accountability (Saunders, 1979). For some, this equates to a lack of formal constitutional entrenchment for local governments that can limit the view of the local state as representative of the local people (Dunleavy, 1980).

Cockburn (1977a) was concerned with the condition of local politics in Lambeth, describing a situation wherein voting turn-out was low, membership and activism of the labour party were not only low, but controlled in poorer working class areas by small cliques of sitting councillors who were all connected via family or friendship ties. Such local political conditions are understood as being bad for the working class, but also unhealthy for the local state and dominant class interests, with less power exerted by local councillors on behalf of their constituents. Cockburn (1977a:93) described 'a co-ordinated and closed council machinery', which could exert little power amidst the new management systems at the time. Whilst Cockburn recognises the central-local tensions in the local state, her account arguably combines these two processes into a unified agent; and instrument of capital, which seems to include local politics as *performing* democracy, when ultimately political parties are part of the wider capitalist state.

Others scholars such as Duncan and Goodwin (1988) have maintained the local has more autonomy and the inherent contradiction in the local state is that it 'is both an agent of, and an obstacle to, central control...it performs both an interpretive and a representational role.' (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988:274).

Of course we are witnessing different political conditions today; whilst voting turn outs remain low in many places there is a more fragmented voting pattern in urban areas through the most recent rise of political parties to the right, and a struggle within labour to capture working class votes, which Sylvia Walby (2015) describes as a potential political crisis³¹. The local political condition of Gateshead will be discussed more fully in Chapter Six. However, one thing that remains similar to Cockburn's local state more generally, is decision making increasingly being made in the hands of officials rather than councillors, and by executives, experts and business elites and partnerships (Peck, 1995; Raco, 2013a) as we saw earlier. This is understood to be significant for the role of politics in the local state, as Cochrane (1993:124) charts:

'It will no longer be possible to equate local politics with the politics of local government, since many of the most important decisions will be taken in quite different forums. And it will only be possible to understand the politics of the local government within a wider framework of local politics and the local state.'

Cochrane (1993:124) further highlights that locally elected members are increasingly becoming one element within a fragmented local state – which is related in part to the conceptual and policy-related shift to consider 'governance' discussed earlier. He claims that such members need to become more rather than less political if they are to maintain a significant role, and reinforce their democratic legitimacy; actively campaigning and building community support. Cochrane considers Councils to no longer be the dominant political actors at local level and calls for people to challenge the assumptions of such governance

³¹ Sylvia Walby (2015) describes the fall in traditional political parties, and the emergence of new ones alongside a demobilised (i.e. not engaging with/in democratic institutions through voting) but growingly discontent population as a political crisis. With this comes a warning that continued discontent and conflict loner being channelled through democratic systems could lead to a crisis in democracy itself.

arrangements. Taking up the earlier point that partnerships are transforming the shape and actions of the local state, the following section considers this in relation to politics.

3.4.2 Partnership working: (post) political local state?

Having established earlier that not only are partnerships conceptually considered to be included within the local state, but that such partnership working is changing the shape of the local state (Peck, 1995; MacLeod, 2011; Peck and Tickell, 2002), the following section will consider the place of politics within such changes. At his time of writing Peck (1995) suggests that such restructuring of the local state had not been fully realized, but had only begun a deconstruction of political processes. Taking leave from this juncture, MacLeod (2011) considers how urban privatism has reconfigured the landscape of urban politics and policy, and specifically highlights that public-private partnership working 'provokes non-trivial questions about the precise manner in which political representation, democracy and substantive citizenship are being negotiated' (MacLeod 2011:2632). MacLeod and Jones (2011) set out in their special issue in *Urban Studies* 'Renewing Urban Politics' to disrupt ideas of governance where increasingly non-government and quasi government actors (such as partnerships) have often taken over the traditional state's role. This blurring of public and private actors and institutions within governance, is understood to result in a depoliticisation of policy making, (MacLeod, 2011; Gotham, 2001) which excludes the interest (and voices) of those who reject the fixation with market dominance. Such changes have been framed by many within a 'post-political' debate.

Following the political philosophy of Ranciere (1999; 2001) and Zizek (1999), and the political theory of Crouch (2004) and Mouffe (2005), Erik Swyngedouw's (2009, 2010, 2011) work has advanced post-political thinking and situated it as part of the neoliberal agenda. Here governance is understood as increasingly being removed from the state and conducted by non-state actors such as

consultants and partner organisations, which Peterson (1981:148) suggests are separate from electoral processes and public accountability becomes 'free of the usual political constraints'. The 'proper' political is thereby removed from the public sphere (Swyngedouw, 2010). This has particularly been the case in planning, where the application of 'experts' and technocratic policy consensus has led many to describe the profession as increasingly 'post-political' (Paddison, 2009; Swyngedouw 2009; MacLeod, 2011, 2013; Allendinger and Haughton 2012). The lines between public and private become increasingly blurred in the state (MacLeod, 2011; Raco, 2013a), and as Minton (2012) shows, accountability is increasingly moved away from elected representatives towards property interests. Partnership and consensual approaches seeks the 'win win win' method to deliver growth/development and community consultation in a developer-friendly environment which comes at the expense of the political (a point which is picked up further in Chapter Six). Similarly Blomley (2004) and Staeheli and Mitchell (2008) have considered local states reaction and regulation to struggles over housing which MacLeod (2011:2652) considers to fall within 'post-political 'common sense' assumptions about property' such as the 'naturalness' of displacement and trickle down economics (Blomley 2004).

However Ranciere (1994, 1999), Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw (2010) consider that the political can never be fully foreclosed, and the post-political is bound to fail under the return of the political. Post-politics for Bylund (2012) is the latest manifestation of the critique of 'democracy deficit' and 'agenda setting' in political theory and he warns that the term is at risk of becoming all encompassing and self fulfilling. Many critics are now moving to question the post-political discourse; understanding it to create artificial binaries between real or antagonistic politics/the police (in Ranciere's terms – which we will return to in Chapter Six) (Beveridge and Koch, 2017), and between consensus and conflict (Legacy, 2016), all of which reduce our ability to see existing forms of everyday politics, or agency (Paddison, 2009). For Bylund (2012), instead of using the post political to diagnose and label, it should provoke critical thought beyond the binary of political and post-political, focusing on complex and heterogeneous publics. Likewise MacLeod (2011:2652) suggests that a post-

political perspective's 'key contribution is actually to raise awareness of the ways in which the strategic selectivities of urban government are being redrafted, and in directing us to how and why significant institutional struggles are being foreclosed.' It should not therefore be interpreted in 'endist' terms (MacLeod 2013), but as always in construction (Mouffe, 2005). It is perhaps the prefix of 'post' which has been taken to imply an end to politics that is problematic to understandings of the term itself for many. MacLeod (2011) suggest the term 'depoliticised' as a more appropriate way to interpret consensus polic(y)ing; in terms of a process, rather than an end point.

It is perhaps more helpful to return to a reading of Crouch's (2004) 'post-democracy' (see also Ranciere 1994, MacLeod, 2011) which explains the condition of mature western democracies, whose maximal sense of democracy (which necessitates very large numbers of people to participate in democracy) has been slowly narrowed over the years to a point where there still exists a democratic framework, albeit hollow and performative. Here such *liberal* democracies narrowly understand democracy as electoral participation, and freedom of businesses to lobby; with minimal activism from citizens. For Crouch, this has paved the way for businesses and elites to make decisions behind 'the spectacle of the electoral game' (ibid:4), resembling pre-democratic times. Crouch highlights that the 'post' prefix is used in a complex way which signals not necessarily the end of democracy, but that something has changed and reduced the importance of democracy, by going beyond it, but importantly leaving strong residues of it. It can thereby be understood as moving beyond the ideal model of democracy, which allowed for confrontation and political activism. Crouch highlights that this model (however idealistic) was only present at a particular moment following the struggle to achieve it, and has since been narrowed, into a superficial form that sees citizens as 'manipulated, passive, rare participants.' (ibid:21). It is perhaps the process of post-democracy that is more helpful to understand the changes, power relations and politics within the local state. The post-democratic condition is used to frame the empirical research findings in relation to changes to the local state in Chapter Six, in a way that builds further upon the SRA approach outlined earlier.

What is of importance to this thesis is investigating the presence, and relations of politics within (and beyond) the local state. Here, it is worth returning to Leitner (1990:156) who highlights that the inherent struggle of multiple and competing demands within the local state, which includes the polity (voting public), suggesting that:

‘the inability of the local state to meet them all simultaneously and satisfactorily, may give rise to explicit political conflict over the role of the local state; conflict which itself can represent a further source of pressure.’

For Leitner (1990), the role of the state is to mediate between these competing demands, and in doing so it is important to consider the power relations that exist between the various sources of pressure, since they do not have equal influence. Therefore to fully consider the extent to which the local state is political or conforming increasingly to the post-democratic agenda, the power relations between the state actors, including the public must be considered through detailed local research. The condition and context of the local state cannot, as Leitner (1990) suggests, be ‘read-off’ from the social structure of the wider capitalist society, but it varies over time and space (Massey and Allen 1984), depending on local and other scales of economic and political conditions.

The local state is therefore a complex set of relations, and importantly it is made up of the people within it as much as the structures they operate within (understood to be flexible and continually changing). The state may also be in part defined by the interactions with others, the public therefore have a part to play (Gramsci, 1971; Leitner, 1990). Chapter Seven offers the conceptual tools of public interest and consensus as a way in which these relations with the public can be helpfully understood. The SRA offers conceptual support to consider such relations in detail, which can offer valuable insights into the political, or post-political, democratic or post-democratic nature of the local state.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has (re)positioned the local state as an important analytic concept in contemporary governance. It has set out a theoretical framework which draws on the work of Jessop, Gramsci, Foucault and others, making the case to examine the local state as a fluid and relational ensemble. The idea of the state *merely* as an institution is abandoned, but importantly it must also include institutional elements, albeit fluid and negotiable. It is here that Jessop's (2016) most recent work on SRA is of particular relevance, and will be drawn upon and developed through deep empirical investigation to give a nuanced account of both the relations and structures within the state.

The local state as a conceptual and analytic framework enables the consideration of the relationships between and amongst local government, new state actors (partners) politics and people. In examining these relations, the power dynamics within and beyond the new and emergent local state become visible and allow us to see who is governing and who matters. Positioning housing as central to a contemporary political economy, it is argued that examining the changing relation of the local state to housing can reveal the changing nature of governing more widely, contributing to debates on entrepreneurialism and financialization, post-politics and post-democracy.

A central premise in this thesis is the importance of in-depth local research that is geographically sensitive and empirically driven as suggested by Painter and Goodwin (1995) and Goodwin and Painter (1996). Whilst establishing the importance of understanding, investigating and conceptually developing the local state, we must not lose sight of the geographical difference and importance of various local states. Following Leitner (1990), close analysis of local context, historic development and political cultures, alongside the wider political economy will be offered. In setting out how the local state is a useful conceptual and analytic site through which to reveal contemporary transformations in local governance, the following chapter will consider how this will be done.

4 Methodologically Researching the Local

4.1 Introduction

This chapter charts the methodological approach to this research; from the foundations of an idea and the navigation of various methods used, to the production of this thesis and dissemination beyond it. It sets out the grounded approach taken to researching the governance, politics and experience of housing change in a particular neighbourhood through an in-depth case study. In doing so, a reflexive account of the politics, tensions and position of research and researcher are considered.

The idea for this research was originally conceived in 2011/2012; borne out of frustrations with my career as a town planner in the North East of England. It was whilst reflecting on the changing role and direction of the planning system, that I was drawn back to a particular scheme that I had encountered in 2007/2008, one that I had professionally and personally questioned at the time: Housing Market Renewal. Returning to academia in 2013 offered me the opportunity to consider these concerns; primarily to understand the necessity and nature of such radical intervention in housing regeneration. Living in close proximity to Bensham and Saltwell myself, I was interested in understanding how HMR was being received by people, beyond the formal channels of consultation I was familiar with professionally. Consequently, there was an underlying question/critique of my own profession's role and reasoning within this process.

The research therefore attempts to balance my multiple identities as researcher, professional planner and also resident of Gateshead, which this chapter will go on to consider. The interconnected nature of researcher and research (Katz, 1994; Rose, 1993) has not only shaped the foundation of the research but the methods and analysis used along the way. Such interconnectedness offers ease of access and depth of existing knowledge (Crang, 1994), but requires reflexivity along the way (Crang and Cook, 2007). Researching a place that I already know

in a professional and existential way requires both new forms of knowing and attempt to *unknow* both my professional training and understandings of the place. It is therefore a study of myself as much as others in some ways (Muetelfeldt 1989; Herbert 2000). Through embedding myself in the research in this way, I strive to bring together practice and academia, which I recognise is subjective and inherently political, but I argue in this chapter that this is importantly so, as it has shaped and deepened the 'knowledge' produced.

4.1.1 A Case Study: Bensham and Saltwell

It was an interest in this particular neighbourhood, its historical development and contemporary changes that formed the research. Through discussions with supervisors, this morphed into a specific interest on the ways in which policy changes have shaped housing in the neighbourhood, and the social implications of such changes. The neighbourhood was not therefore selected as an appropriate case study within which to fit or test research questions, but rather the starting point was always the place. The research therefore takes a grounded and process orientated view of research, one that has not been led by literature, but informed by it along the way (Crang and Cook, 2007). This has enabled me to be flexible and responsive, to account for existing and new forms of knowledge, bringing them together and navigating through research aims and questions, which have evolved along the way.

The use of a case study as a research strategy is an important one when trying to empirically investigate issues in depth. It was the depth and detail of investigation of housing in this place that was the foundation of the research and the reason why a single and not comparative case study approach was taken. This approach allows for consideration of relationships and processes that are complicated and connected in a particular place, or 'case' (Yin, 1989). Case studies also involve multiple methods to achieve the required depth of investigating a place (Yin, 2009), which will be discussed in this chapter.

Although certain empirical findings of case studies may not be generalizable as they relate to a specific place (Descombe, 2003; Robson, 2011), theoretical or methodological generalisations about how to understand *the local* can be drawn. As we saw in Chapter Two, Bensham and Saltwell as an ex-industrial neighbourhood, has undergone long term regeneration and cycles of change, both physically and socially as has been the case in many other Northern neighbourhoods, towns and cities. It is also undergoing current regeneration through a Joint Venture Partnership, which is a growing mode of housing delivery across the UK under conditions of local authority cuts and wider austerity. This therefore makes for an important case study to consider the fluctuating and current local government strategies, local governance, politics and social implications of housing regeneration, with a contribution beyond this place in terms of policy and future research.

4.1.2 Grounding the Local

In doing research, a philosophical choice is being made in the first instance (Graham, 2005) and the selection of methods used to conduct the research is also underpinned by philosophical or theoretical choices. The grounded approach taken in this research emphasises the basis of theory in the observations of the real world, as opposed to the abstract. This has offered a flexible approach to building a conceptual framework (Robson, 2011), that was outlined in Chapter three; building on a strategic relational approach to understanding the local state and governing of housing. Like Cockburn (1977) and Allen's (2008) studies of local places, this research is situated in a specific place, at a specific time which takes account of external relations and the past in order to understand the present. However, whilst a strategic relational view of the local state maintains a basis in a Marxian capitalist political-economy, it moves away from the rigidity of class-centred Marxist approaches that earlier studies of local places lean towards (for example Cockburn, 1977; Allen, 2008). Instead it moves towards more open-ended understandings of the state (Jessop, 2016). Similarly, the local is also understood here relationally, as a product of interconnections (Pierce et al, 2010; Martin, 2013) with individual agency, social structure and space all related and

mutually constitutive (Massey, 1991, 1994, 1997; Harvey 1989). This theoretical approach enables an understanding of reality that can allow for multiple and complicated accounts, and was arrived at through embracing a grounded approach and variety of mixed methods to research the local.

4.2 Researching the Local: Mixed Methods

The following sections set out the mixed methods used to research housing in this place, tracing the process in more or less chorological order; beginning with a scoping exercise to ground and inform the beginnings of the research.

4.2.1 Scoping: Casting the Net

The initial PhD proposal aimed to understand why the neighbourhood was defined as being in need of regeneration, what impact such initiatives had on the landscape and built environment and finally, how localism was taking shape in the area and impacting different communities. However, further to a literature review and discussions with practitioners and supervisors, it was considered appropriate to reconsider this initial PhD proposal particularly in light of how localism was unfolding at the time. A preliminary net was therefore cast (Crang and Cook, 2007) through a scoping exercise in the first year of research (February/March 2014). This was done to ascertain specific themes or points of interest to inform and guide future research. The scoping exercise consisted of a preliminary analysis of documents produced by or on behalf of Gateshead Council on recent regeneration, a review of the most recent plans for regeneration, and initial archival research to establish what level of information was available. I also used my existing contacts (as recommended by Crang and Cook, 2007) and informally interviewed three key Council officers in the housing, regeneration and planning sections about the most recent regeneration, establishing what they considered to be important issues to consider. Time was also spent in the neighbourhood, particularly around the sites where housing was being demolished, talking to people on the streets about it and taking photographs. In developing my existing contacts and making new ones, the scoping exercise also acted as a formal 'dress rehearsal' (Yin, 2009) or pilot study

(Robson, 2011) for future research as a process of snowballing, and identifying 'gate keepers' began.

The scoping exercise was invaluable to the research design and direction, as I was able to decipher themes of interest; history/heritage, design, representation and resistance (a detailed account of these themes is included in Appendix A). Together with a literature review conducted in the first year, the scoping exercise shifted the focus of the research away from the proposed emphasis on localism, towards a consideration of the changing nature of the local state. In an example of the field not being what you anticipate (Crang and Cook, 2007), it was apparent at that time that the localism agenda was not unfolding in this particular place, despite a withdrawal of central funding for HMR. Instead of devolving power, the Council were maintaining (or increasing) control over housing regeneration through a Joint Venture Partnership, which was changing the nature of the local state, and also challenging my own existing understanding or knowledge. With a new direction for the research, the following sections consider the methods undertaken from this point.

4.2.2 Archival research

Regeneration of this neighbourhood, as we saw in Chapter Two has been a long-term and cyclical process. It was therefore considered appropriate to undertake some archival research in order to 'provide a particular window on the geography of earlier times' (Roche, 2005:134-135). This method offers an opportunity to re-evaluate taken for granted concepts or understandings of a place in the past and in relation to how we understand it today (Mayhew, 2003), particularly since people in the scoping exercise continually referred to the history of the place; in both a negative and positive sense.

Having established contact with the local historian at Gateshead Library in the earlier scoping exercise, I was able to quickly gain access to a range of sources such as historic Council Proceedings, Council News, local history books and other reports and publications. I was interested in building a picture of both the

historic development of housing in the neighbourhood and the governance and politics of past interventions in housing. Spending time in Gateshead Central Library, which is located in Bensham, also afforded me the opportunity to recruit interviewees through conversations and putting posters up.

The information gathered from this process was useful in contextualizing housing development as set out in Chapter Three. However, since Gateshead Council produced the majority of archival sources relating specifically to intervention in housing, it must be recognised that this only offers one perspective; that of the function and proceedings of the local authority. As such it is a partial picture (Roche, 2005), and perhaps a biased one (Robson, 2011) which foregrounds the viewpoints of those with decision making powers. The inherent power relations in the very production and survival of documents must be appreciated since archives are often sporadic and selective (Baker, 2003; Clarke, 2005).

It was particularly found that there was very little reference in the archives to the public reaction to intervention in housing, or any political resistance to this. It may be that hegemonic recordings of history silence such voices. It could of course be the case that there was not any public resistance or opposition to housing intervention, certainly only a limited amount was found through other methods (as discussed in Chapters Two and Six). However a definite knowledge claim cannot be drawn from this method alone and analysing historic sources can often only get 'the answers to the question to which it is applied' (Carney, 1973:284), and cannot be used to openly search for an answer. As such, through archival research, useful information was gathered and is helpful in contextualising historic development. However it was inflexible, limited and most likely biased, particularly in presenting information as hard, uncontested facts. For the purposes of this research, which takes a relational approach to understanding a place in depth, it is important that this method only forms part of a multi-method design (Robson, 2011).

4.2.3 Document analysis

A systematic analysis of all HMR documentation produced by or on behalf of Gateshead Council, and wider regeneration strategies was undertaken in order to understand the necessity and logic behind the regeneration process. Assessing the 'evidence base' revealed the way in which the housing market and the neighbourhood was being understood from a professional point of view, and forms the basis of the argument discussed in Chapter Five on the deconstruction and reconstruction of the housing market. The documents were analysed through critically reading them; to open up debate beyond the immediate texts (Duncan and Duncan, 2001) and in a way that 'opens its political subterfuge' (Aitken, 2005). Analysis is based on a broader understanding of 'texts' which includes written text as well as maps, graphs, charts, photographs etc. (see Barnes and Duncan, 1992). A summary of the documents that were analysed can be found at Appendix C.

Analysing texts is subjective and inherently political. I was aware that my professional knowledge of both producing and consuming (through interpretation) such documents meant that such analysis simultaneously enhanced and challenged my technical knowledge. It was necessary to try and suspend or 'unknow' such a professional perspective temporarily in order to bring an alternative critical perspective, informed by theory and other critical work, notably that of Chris Allen (2008) and David Webb (2010). I recognise that this suspension of knowledge was not always achieved, and I fell into the trap of accepting/unquestioning familiar terminology and making assumptions based on my existing knowledge at times. However, overall it was because of the professional knowledge that I possess that I was able to continually challenge, and effectively have a conversation with my dual perspectives as critical researcher and professional. This meant that I was able to provide more probing insights into the professional rationale and the changing nature and fluidity of the local state, which may otherwise have appeared more structured to a researcher without this knowledge or experience.

The documents analysed were produced by or on behalf of the Council by a range of consultants. Therefore there is an inherent power structure in the large-scale production of multiple documents, which must be considered carefully. The findings (discussed in Chapter Five) suggest that primacy is given to economic factors above the social ones in these documents and their collective use suggests a systematic power structure at play in the creation of expert knowledge. Whilst this is an interesting finding itself, it remains a partial finding within the wider context of the research. Document analysis in this case could not account for the everyday life and experience of residents, or political points of view and so again this method should not be relied upon in isolation in order to address the aim of this particular research. The use of various other methods makes space to understand simultaneous processes and multiple voices that this method alone cannot account for, to understand the local and the local state within a relational approach. For example, findings through interviews and more ethnographical approaches discussed in Chapter Five move towards a discursive understanding of knowledge production (Foucault, 1980); where the production of evidence by experts produces specific understandings of knowledge which are accepted as 'truth' or 'common sense'. Chapter Seven goes on to consider how this knowledge regulates the lives of residents (Hay, 2005).

The method was extremely useful in being able to demonstrate the inherent problems in the production and use of 'expert knowledge' and its role and power in shaping decisions and beliefs. The findings from documentary analysis were also used to shape the questions asked in other methods such as at interviews and focus groups, and was an important part of a mixed method approach. However, it was limited in that not all of the relevant documents were available for analysis; some of them were 'internal' working documents of which partial sections were made available, others were not locatable due to the time lapsed since their use. This could lead to a partial view of the whole, although overall it is considered that the key documents, which went on to inform the production of the public facing ones for HMR, have been analysed. The same could not be said for the most recent Gateshead Regeneration Partnership as I was unable to access any documentation in relation to this. In particular the series of legal

agreements that formed the partnership were said to be ‘commercially sensitive’ and unavailable to the public or myself as researcher, a limitation similarly found by Raco (2013a). Requests for redacted versions of such documentation and offering a disclaimer to not reproduce commercially sensitive information were still declined. Whilst this is undoubtedly a methodological limitation, it is also an important finding in itself that will be discussed in relation to public interest in Chapter Seven.

A final limitation of this method comes with the time that has lapsed between the production of the documents and the present day. This was particularly limiting in not being able to understand the co-production of evidence and relations between actors (Parker and Street, forthcoming, 2017), as such issues were not presented overtly in the documents, and were unable to be answered by existing officers in follow up interviews, due to staff turn-over over the years, or a lack of memory.

4.2.4 Interviews

Interviews were the central method of the research that offered the opportunity to explore the findings of other methods, and deepen understandings; they formed part of a blurring of methodological types (Crang and Cook, 2007; Murphy, 1999). For example documentary analysis informed the basis of interviews which explored understandings of the housing market (Chapter Five) and through ‘hanging around’ I was able to investigate issues of public interest further in formal interviews (Chapter Seven). This section relates to formal interviews that were planned in advance, semi-structured, recorded and later transcribed. More informal interview methods are considered in the later section 4.2.6 on ‘hanging around’.

In attempting to establish a range of perspectives and experiences of housing regeneration, which ranged from professional to very personal, interviews were helpful to meaningfully explore differences of opinions and complexities (Bennett, 2002). A total of thirty eight in-depth interviews were conducted, with some (mainly professional) respondents being interviewed twice. Interviews

lasted approximately an hour, and in some cases were paired interviews, consisting of two participants in one interview.

Category	Interviews	Repeat interviews
Local Government	8	5
Resident ³²	6	
Local Business	1	1
Community Organisation	12	
Local Politician	3	2

The participants were selected initially through existing contacts with local government officers and desk-based identification of key officers. Contact was made via email which outlined the research, and clearly positioned myself in my researcher role to give participants the opportunity to fully consider any involvement. Snowballing was then used, following up any recommendations or opportunities to interview other people (Patton, 1990) and identifying gatekeepers within local government. I identified and approached all community organisations in the area that I had not been put in contact with, and was able to gain access through such interviews to more informal interviews, and focus groups discussed in the following sections 4.2.5 and 4.2.6. The residents I formally interviewed were people that I had been put in touch with through snowballing, and personal contacts.

Interviews took place in a range of places, it was important that all participants had control over the location, and felt it was a safe environment to talk in. Community organisations, local politicians and local government interviews were conducted in the workplace, although in the case of local government officers (as opposed to managers or more senior positions) this was usually conducted in the cafeteria as opposed to the office, as requested by participants to feel less formal and to not be overheard. Residents were interviewed in a place of their choosing; in a local café, leisure centre, library or their home. As Bennet (2002) suggests might be the case, some participants were initially inhibited and self-conscious about being recorded, but became more comfortable as the

³² Note that a number of respondents who fall into other categories (notably community organisations and politicians) were also local residents.

interview progressed. It was also important to take note of conversations in a field diary that took place after the formal interview had finished as participants often revealed more information or elaborated on key points when they were more relaxed and spoke more openly.

Interviews were structured in the sense that they were approached with a pre-prepared list of indicative questions, and an approximate structure; opening with more general and background questions before moving onto specific areas of interest (Dunn, 2005). I also used an exercise towards the end of interviews wherein I asked interviewees to organise a series of themes on cards (with the option to add additional themes on blank cards that they thought were relevant). Photographs taken from this exercise are included in Appendix D. Although the organisation of the cards was not analysed in any depth³³, this exercise was useful in prompting opinions or attitudes that had not necessarily been offered previously, or it allowed participants to think about issues in more depth. It was important to allow for flexibility in the way issues were addressed by the interviewee (Denscombe, 2003), and to leave space for respondents to raise and explore unforeseen issues, and have far reaching discussions. Keeping the interview conversational and having an open dialogue (Valentine, 2005) was important; a 'conversation with a purpose' (Eyles, 1988) rather than feeling like an interrogation for objects of information (England 1994). It was important that respondents were aware that their views were valued and treated with respect.

I was sensitive to the power laden relationship of interviewer over interviewee (Katz, 1992), which I experienced particularly when interviewing residents, and the reversal of this within elite interviews (Valentine, 2005). It was clear at points that these relations of power influenced the information that was given, particularly when respondents spoke more freely when the voice recorder was

³³ The cards were not analysed in depth because of the sheer volume of information that I had collected, I had to prioritise what themes and threads I pursued. Since the cards produced individual prioritisations and understandings of the place, whilst interesting and revealing (especially in the differentiation of professionals view of the place from their personal view of this place, or how they would prioritise their 'own' place), this was heavily influenced by the pre-production of cards by myself. Therefore it was considered that the cards exercise was useful in prompting conversations, but their analysis would have been limited and strayed from the direction of immediate interest for the thesis.

turned off, and offered more informal opinions and relaxed attitudes. It must be accepted that this is a limitation of the formal interview method. The type of information given in interviews may also have been influenced by my dual insider/outsider role of my multiple identities as researcher, ex-local government planner, which I disclosed in advance of interviews. Whilst the 'insider' role afforded by my previous position enabled me to gain access and trust with local government and local political respondents, this same position equally position me as an 'outsider' to a few residents. Whilst I was prepared for some scepticism, I was not expecting the level of hostility and mistrust from one particular respondent, who effectively used the interview as an opportunity to express their anger, and exercise the power of being interviewed over me as interviewer, as the reflections from my research diary show:

'[they] did not want to be recorded due to what appeared to be a mistrust of both myself and the Council. [They were] very critical of planning and repeatedly asked if I was offended by what [they] said. I said I was no longer a planner and had left due to my own concerns and in no way was I offended by what they had said, which [they] seemed disappointed with. It was clear [they were] nervous towards me and what my agenda was. [They] said [they were] sure I was finding people very different to how [they were] describing them - "I am sure they are not like this with you". [They] asked what my qualifications were in, and whether or not I was studying psychology when I asked particular questions. [They] repeatedly said [they] had a degree themselves and were educated to understand what was going on. It was evident that [they] came with a story to tell and it felt like an opportunity for [them] to get things said to someone who was a planner. [They] were articulate and forthright, and the conversation felt very one sided.'

(Research Diary, March, 2015)

Reflecting on the interview in this way in the research diary was helpful in detaching myself as the object of this respondent's frustration, and understanding their position in relation to their own experiences of and anger towards the local authority, which was after all the impetus for the interview. Whilst my own position had clearly influenced their responses in this case, this was not considered to have been present (or as explicit) across other interviews and as such is not understood to directly impact on the wider research findings.

The use of formal interviews and snowballing was extremely useful for accessing the structure of local government and local politics, and enabled me to navigate access through gatekeepers. However, it became apparent that this method had also given me access to a network strongly associated with the role of local government, through political, professional and social connections. One local councillor on putting me in touch with a local resident described them as being within their 'inner circle', and I described an awareness of this network at the time in my field diary as being 'self-supporting in their shared goals for the area' (Field Diary, February, 2015). The finding that such a network exists was interesting to the wider understanding of the governance of the place, but methodologically it was important that I moved beyond this to access alternative networks, and importantly the 'un-networked'. I therefore relied on further desk-based identification of groups and organisations, and on other methods such as 'hanging-around' in order to do this.

A final point to consider in the use of interviews as a method is that they provide information only on what people say they believe or understand (Silverman, 2000) and responses are inevitably influenced by a number of factors such as perceptions of myself, reflective performance of identity, professional position etc. This was apparent as one professional respondent told me:

'I am trying to decide whether I am being me genuinely, or whether its because I am being asked - what do I want to be on record as saying, or what do I actually think...and partly I think its what you might want to hear to be honest'

(Council Respondent, January 2015)

It is important to be aware of such a performance in interview situations, and particularly to acknowledge that 'the stories [interviewees] are telling are often not simply made up on the spur of the moment. Many will have been told, retold and refined on a number of occasions' (Crang and Cook, 2007:70). In the case of professional actors, it was sometimes felt that the narrative they offered in interviews had been rehearsed through recounting multiple times, and thereby acted as a means of validation for the regeneration process. It was therefore important to ask specific questions to clarify certain points in interviews. Repeat

interviews were conducted with many professional respondents in order to deepen my understanding of their experiences and opinions, and particularly as an opportunity to ask more searching, and perhaps uncomfortable questions, having established familiarity under a longer period of engagement (Kitchin and Tate, 2013).

Maintaining informal contact beyond the formal interviews and being immersed in the area during the period of research was particularly important. One respondent reflected that they had thought a lot about the interview after it had taken place, and wanted to continue the conversation after such reflections. They had also taken the time to give me various materials they had collected over the years; newspaper reports, photographs, a film and correspondence in relation to the regeneration. This reflection shows the importance of immersion and multiple methods in deepening research relationships and understanding reactions, since interviews can only 'scratch the surface of an interviewee's life' (Crang and Cook, 2007:73).

4.2.5 Focus Groups

Focus groups were a useful supplementary method to interviews in two ways. Firstly they enabled access to multiple participants at once, and ease of access in doing so. Secondly they were an opportunity to understand how people consider their thoughts and feelings in a social context, how they negotiate meaning and participate in debate, which is a different dynamic to an interview situation (Crang and Cook, 2007; Conradson, 2005). In this way, focus groups offer an insight into the practice of knowledge production. Cameron (2005) notes the potential 'synergistic' effect of focus groups, which can generate more information through being interactive, and allowing different points to be explored, discussed, disagreed with and reflected upon. This is therefore an important method in understanding the multiple meanings that people attribute to places, relationships, processes, and events.

Originating in market research and group psychotherapy (Crang and Cook, 2007; Conradson, 2005), focus groups are now a popular method in social science research more widely. Many scholars follow the origins of the method and advocate researchers recruiting individual participants who are not connected to each other, bringing them together in a focus group (Powell et al 1996; Bloor et al, 2001; Conradson, 2005, Cameron, 2005). However, since this research is place based and takes a grounded approach to understanding peoples relationship to housing changes, as opposed to testing a particular theory or set of questions, it was considered appropriate to engage with already assembled community groups at churches, community centres, charities as well as professional and political groups. Not only did this allow an instant familiarity to the group, enabling confidence to speak (Crang and Cook, 2007), but it was also efficient in practical terms; making contact with group organisers who already had access to meeting spaces and times etc. There was also a degree of homogeneity within some existing groups, which is recommended generally by Conradson (2005).

A total of four focus groups were undertaken with local councillors, a social group at a community centre, an asylum seekers group at a local charity and a church coffee morning. The groups ranged in the amount of participants from three to eight. It should be noted that a blurring of method types arrives in defining a focus group, particularly since other methods such as the informal interviews were conducted sometimes in depth with groups of people. However, I have reserved defining focus groups to those groups with whom I had arranged to meet and were aware of my research in advance, and whose conversations I recorded. Also one focus group was intended to be with three participants, but since one cancelled at the last minute the discussion could be classed as a paired interview. However, since the session was focused around a particular group task and I had interviewed the participants formally beforehand, I have included it here as a focus group.

The approach taken to focus groups varied from group to group depending on a number of factors such as whether I had spoken to them before, the dynamics of the groups and the venue. For two of the groups I based the discussion around

the themes exercise as discussed earlier at section 4.2.4, alongside a list of indicative questions. This gave structure to the discussion and a focus, which was helpful in directing the conversation and managing a larger group. However it was noted that embedded hierarchies and power structures in already existing groups came to the fore, and some groups members tended to be more dominant, as Conradson (2005) suggested might be the case. This evidently closed down the opinions of other group members, and did not allow space for debate, resulting in fairly one sided finding more inline with that of an interview. The other two groups I approached in a similar way to interviews; with a flexible list of questions to guide the conversation, but maintaining an open dialogue.

Moderating and facilitating focus groups is an important consideration; to keep conversations going, but to also keep them on target and managing group relations (Kruegar, 1988; Conradson, 2005). It was important not to fall into the role of 'note taker' and so recording the discussions and reflecting on them immediately after in the research diary enabled me to be engaged in the conversation and able to moderate discussions (Cameron, 2005). This was particularly challenging in different groups for different reasons; one had a dominant group member, one had a group supervisor present which brought inherent power relations to the discussion, and one group were initially reluctant to share their thoughts and experiences with me as an 'outsider' whose views they were unsure of. Whilst I was more comfortable and able to negotiate power dynamics within groups, and encouraging everyone to speak without pushing them to do so, it was more challenging to manage the group in which the supervisor was present. I felt that it was inappropriate to encourage group members to talk in a situation that could compromise their future relationships with the supervisor and there was a particular vulnerability in relation to housing amongst members of this group. I was aware that those in the group who felt more able to speak out were met with hostility or challenged on their views, and so I had to accept the dynamics of this group and the inherent power relationship and instead of encouraging people to talk in this situation, I directed questions to less contentious issues, and ended the session earlier than I had anticipated.

More generally, the group sizes affected the range of discussions; within larger groups it took more time to make space for everyone to contribute whilst smaller group sizes were easier to manage. In all but one of the focus groups, a relaxed discussion took place, which allowed participants to debate and respond to each other's opinions, often with less prompting from myself (Kruger & Casey, 2000). My own position within the focus groups varied from group to group. Within one I was initially considered an 'insider' upon realising that I was from Gateshead and not as one person put it, a 'posh Durham student'. However, I was aware that this position changed as the group queried precisely where I lived, and I was placed as being an 'outsider' to the neighbourhood once again. Within the group I had already met several times, I was considered to be an insider throughout as a level of trust had been established. Within the asylum seeker group, I was an outsider from the beginning to group members, but an insider to the supervisor.

Participant: 'are we getting paid for this, she looks rich'

Supervisor: 'Ha! There are not many rich people from round here.'

(Focus Group, March 2015)

Navigating my positionality in relation to others has been an on-going process throughout the research, and is discussed further in section 4.4. Overall focus groups provided an insight into collective opinions, and an opportunity to observe debates and reasoning on housing issues in a particular place, which would not have been known through other methods. Focus groups therefore supplement and compliment other methods, however it must be acknowledged that the findings from such groups are not generalizable, even within the same place. Furthermore the group dynamics acted as a barrier to revealing the opinions of all group members, and were managed/directed less efficiently than other methods such as interviews. Whilst a useful method in establishing more general or surface opinions on housing in the area, the information gathered from focus groups was less useful in directly addressing the research questions than document analysis, interviews and hanging around.

4.2.6 Hanging Around: Informal Interviews and Participatory Observation

The identification of a local network that my position and contacts enabled me to access through interviews (discussed in section 4.2.4) was also a cause to seek alternative methods to reach those who were inaccessible through snowballing interviews. I therefore began to simply 'hang around' the neighbourhood, a method of participant observation that Wogan (2004) describes as 'deep hanging out' in relation to researching accounts of community culture. Through such participation, researchers can better understand lived, sensed, experienced and emotional worlds (Herbert, 2000) of residents. However, it is recognised that this method can bring with it an inherent practice of power (Rose, 1993), and this is particularly the case when considering the nature of the production and reproduction of markets (in this case the housing market) where ethnography is rarely carried out amongst elites, but amongst the poor and powerless in society (Abolafia, 1996). It was therefore important that this was not a detached observation, but more a process of learning through conversation (Crang and Cook, 2007) and an in-depth understanding through direct experience (Kearns 2005:193). My position as a near-by resident also meant that there was not a distinct separation of cultures through observation (Herbert, 2000).

Through hanging around the neighbourhood, particularly the sites of demolition and adjacent streets, as well as going to local cafes, talking to residents sitting on their front steps on sunny days, and attending local events such as church coffee mornings and exhibitions I undertook many conversations with residents. Whilst I did not record these conversations, I made people aware of what I was researching, and made note of approximately 42 such substantial informal interviews in a field diary. These place-situated conversations lasted from approximately 10 minutes to 45 minutes.

Category	Number of Participants
Resident	30
Local Business Owners	9
Community Organisation	1

As a result of the longevity of time spent in the field (approximately nine months, although not intensively as this was combined with formal interviews and other desk-based work), and the blurring of methods used in this approach, I spoke to some people several times. Whilst we saw earlier in section 4.2.4, that this was helpful in deepening some relationships following a formal interview, conversely it had a negative effect in certain situations. For example, a group conversation in a local café included a resident that I had previously spoken to, who expressed some frustration at having ‘already told you this’, I was again aware of my ‘outsider’ position as a researcher, and an awareness that I needed to be careful in not making people feel uncomfortable, or saturated by research.

I also spent time ‘deep hanging out’ (Wogan, 2004) with local ward councillors, aside from formal interviews and focus groups, I went on a long walk around the neighbourhood with them, exploring historic changes, points of interest and meeting people they knew, making contacts which led to further interviews. This method of interviewing people on the move enables people to situate and recount complex and fluid events and memories in a place they know well (Crang and Cook 2007; Anderson, 2004). I was aware that spending time in this way also enabled participants to come to know me and my position through their own questioning.

As we have seen, the different methods employed in this research have had their own strengths and weaknesses. The central methods that gave rise to the main findings of the thesis have been interviews, hanging around and document analysis, with the former having provided much of the in-depth findings. Other methods such as focus groups and archival research have been helpful in contextualising the wider research, but of less importance to the main findings. Importantly, the use of different methods complimented each other, and was useful in gaining a deep and varied understanding of the subject. It is considered that using a mixed methods approach has been the most appropriate way to research this subject and area, although lessons have been learned along the way. The variety of methods used resulted in a considerable amount of information or

'data' being complied, which was a limitation within itself when it came to analysing all the information from different sources, and in various formats.

4.3 Analysis

Taking a grounded approach to the research, I began a process of 'open coding'; slowly and manually working through transcripts from interviews and focus groups as well as the field diary, noting themes as they occur in the margins. Despite undertaking training on coding software (NVivo) I decided that this was not an appropriate form of analysis for such ethnographical material, and instead invested time in gaining familiarity with the materials, and giving more emphasis to interpreting them (Robson, 2011). From coding, I established sixteen separate themes³⁴, and created a word document for each one; copying and pasting the relevant extracts from the highlighted interview transcripts into each. Taking a step back to collate themes and develop their meaning in notes was important; what Crang (2005) calls making 'theoretical memos'. Through an iterative process of considering these themes alongside the document analysis and archival research findings and more 'loosely constructed data' (Crang and Cook 2007:131) such as notes, photographs and materials given to me by residents, I began to make sense of the themes, which took time.

Multiple themes became larger categories due to their interlinked nature, for example the themes of contestation, class, community and stigma became a larger theme of representation and public interest, which went on to form the basis of Chapter Seven. Other themes had to be broken down so that their meanings were better understood, for example decision making went on to be broken down into politics, experts and structure of the state, which then informed parts of Chapters Five and Six. This process is known as 'axial coding' (Strauss, 1987; Robson, 2011), and again was a recursive process that involved moving between literature, data and ideas, and back again. Other themes such as

³⁴ Themes established were: austerity, local politics, renting, stigma, housing market, wider market, class, potential, contestation, community, Jewish community, design, history, decision making, joint venture partnership, refugees.

the Jewish community and design were abandoned through selective coding, as a story emerged. It is important to note that the emergence of a story involved difficult decisions and was a creative and personal process; mapping out the interconnectedness of themes that fitted into my ontological and epistemological position; my own experience of the place. Someone else would have collected different data, or even interpreted the same data differently, indeed there were multiple theses that I could have produced; a reflexive consideration of the account I chose to give is important and is considered in the following section 4.4 on positionality. I selected themes based partially on what I had a substantial amount of information on, and partially on how these themes fitted together. For example, I had a relatively smaller amount of information to be able to speak in detail about the theme of the Jewish community, and so this was dropped as a focus. Although I had a relatively larger amount of findings on different communities and understandings of the notion of community, it was felt that this did not make an original contribution to understanding this locality, or contemporary changes to the local state, and so this was dropped as a direct theme. It was also considered that themes such as design and refugees were less directly linked to the overarching theme on understanding the changing nature of the local state than say politics was or decision-making.

The selection of themes and an overarching narrative was a way of conceptually organising material, but such themes were not an explanatory framework in themselves (Crang, 2005). Considering literature of place-based studies (i.e. Allen, 2008; Cockburn, 1977a) and drawing on a range of methods for inter-subjective richness (Hunt, 1989) led onto the final form of analysis: writing. Unlike many accounts of 'writing-up' research findings, the process of writing was as much a process of thinking and analysis, and involved re-writing and shaping ideas along the way. Writing is re-presenting the research through a particular medium, which gives it form and brings less separation between the field and writing as is often indicated (Mansvelt and Berg, 2005). As a process of analysis then, writing is again subjective and requires reflexivity of my own position in my writing. Furthermore, there is an inherent power embodied in the words we use, which is why a right of reply is important for those we research

(see section 4.6) as an opportunity to better balance this power dynamic of research. In researching this particular neighbourhood 'the notion of local, situated knowledge raises the broader political (and ethical) issue of who has the entitlement, or authority, to represent the lives of particular people to a wider audience?' (Smith, 2010: 415). The following sections will consider this question in relation to my own positionality.

4.4 Positionality

'Oh yes, I can tell you are a local lass'
(Resident. Focus Group, March 2015)

'Well Low Fell isn't the same as Bensham, it's posh'
(Resident. Focus Group, March 2015)

'Are you back on the (Gateshead Council) email system then?'
(Council respondent. Conversation, February 2014)

'The problem is professional planners don't have a clue. Planning is an oxymoron. Sorry, I know you are a planner, does that offend you?'
(Resident. Interview, March 2015)

'She is from Durham University, I am helping her, talking about the regeneration- anything to stick the boot in Gateshead Council'
(Business Owner. Hanging Around, April 2015)

As the above quotes reveal, and we have seen throughout this chapter, I occupy multiple positions and identities through being embedded in the research as researcher, professional planner and resident of Gateshead (but importantly to some, not resident of Bensham and Saltwell). I also possess a 'multiple self' identity in terms of my race, nationality, age, gender and social and economic status and these may influence the 'data' collected, and in turn the knowledge created (Madge, 1993). These multiple positions have required constant navigation by both participants and myself as I switched from being both 'insider' and 'outsider' to different people. At other moments my identity was more fluid, and came in and out of focus within the same conversations (Crang and Cook, 2007; Bennett, 2002). It must be recognised that my own values and beliefs have formed this research (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2005; Jacobs, 1999). As such, it has been a messy process, but one that importantly accepts and

foregrounds that 'research is an embodied activity that draws in our whole physical person, along with all its inescapable identities. What we bring to the research affects what we get' (Crang and Cook, 2007:9). A demand to situate *what we get* in terms of knowledge is a demand to recognise this mess and complexity (Rose, 1997). Furthermore, my experience of being in the field does not automatically generate knowledge, but may allow me to analyse and tell a specific story, for which I must be accountable for my own position, politics and assumptions which have changed throughout (Hyndman, 2001; Haraway, 1991; Dyck, 1997) and requires reflexivity. The following sections consider reflections on my separate positions of professional planner, resident and researcher.

4.4.1 Professional Planner

Approaching the research involved a period of transition for myself from a planner to a researcher of planning/regeneration, which was challenging and in some ways remains incomplete. It was a critical reflection on and even frustration at my own professional experience that founded and shaped the research as well as participants responses to me as researcher. My professional experience has brought with it a knowledge that Gillian Rose (1997) considers to be inextricably connected to power, and I have had to manage situations where I make assumptions which could exclude or even erase other forms of knowledge by making sure that I clarify or further question statements that have been made, or repeat statement along the lines of 'so what you are saying is...'. This was the same in reverse with participants who relied on my professional knowledge and often underpinned conversations with 'you will know all about this', and I had to sometimes surrender my knowledge to ask them to explain things to avoid making my own assumptions, or acting as an expert (England, 1994), although this was not always achieved. I also recognise that my professional knowledge and understanding of processes and rational presented me with a sense of protection of professional participants at times, and yet this same sense of understanding brought tension and frustration in some of the findings that challenged my own values and beliefs.

On the whole I found professional participants who were (or would have been) my professional peers to accept and trust me in my position as a researcher, and a shared identity had a positive effect (Valentine, 2005; Dyck, 1997). However my identity as a researcher was often blurred, for example asking if I was back on the email system required me to clarify my position as outside researcher. In the case of senior professional figures and politicians, whilst my professional position got me through the door, my position of outside researcher was much more defined, and I had to work to gain their trust. It should be noted that upon reflection of my findings, I am uncomfortable with being in the position of a researcher (and subsequently a position of power) who is drawing on my previous position as a professional to gain the trust of participants. Despite fully disclosing my researcher position in advance of formal interviews, and openly discussing this with participants, there remains an element of trust which I feel has in some way been exploited, which I perhaps would not have felt had I been researching a different place, or perhaps found different things.

My professional experience was disclosed to all participants in formal interviews and focus groups, and as such it also had an impact on participants outside of local government and as we saw in section 4.2.4, this was sometimes felt negatively and produced anger and mistrust. However on the whole my position as an ex-professional planner completing independent research was accepted by participants, often with intrigue. I did not reveal my ex professional role to people whilst hanging around, unless it came up in conversations, simply because conversations were often brief and informal and it seemed unnecessary to do so. However, I recognise that this may have influenced the way in which people responded to me, for example, it was particularly noticeable that people were open about criticising the Council in this context, which some respondents who knew about my background were more reluctant to do.

4.4.2 Local Resident

My position as 'being from' Gateshead meant that I was accepted in many ways by participants as being an 'insider', but equally not being specifically from this neighbourhood meant I was positioned as a 'posh' outsider by others. Whilst this

outsider/insider tension in identity was not always present, on the whole being from Gateshead definitely helped me engage with people openly. This was highlighted by a group of residents who recounted a situation wherein university students were used to consult with local residents as part of HMR. The residents described the students as being 'southern' and 'patronising', whereas I was perceived to hold no such barriers and a shared similar identity built rapport and shaped conversations in many instances (Valentine, 2005). This rapport, and conversely outsider position is likely to have shaped the responses that people gave.

Beyond my immediate *local* identity, my connection to the research became bound up in ways that I had not accounted for. For example, I spent a lot of time at a 'Secret Streets of Gateshead' exhibition, which displayed old photographs and maps of streets that had undergone slum clearance over the decades. When talking to my family about this, my Grandad asked if I would take him one day, and we traced two houses he had lived at in the past. One was a terraced house that he had moved to at an early age (as a family of Irish immigrants coming to Gateshead in 1920s for his fathers work as a house builder) and was later subject to slum clearance. The second house was a railway cottage that my Dad was born in, which they rented at the time through his employment in the railway, in the knowledge that it was in a slum clearance area in central Gateshead. They rented this house for a number of years so that they would stand a better chance of getting a Council house when it was demolished, which they did in 1959. I can therefore chart my own family history into the continual change (both the building and displacement) of housing in Gateshead, which was discussed in Chapter Two.

Spending time at this event, locating photographs and maps of our housing history, and helping others to do the same became much more of an emotional and embodied experience than I had anticipated and most likely influenced the direction or intensity of the research. For example it enabled me to more closely identify with residents who described a loss of community through displacement, but simultaneously the positive experiences of being placed in

council housing, which is not available on the same scale for residents being displaced today. My epistemological understanding of the state and arguments made in this thesis have inevitably been shaped through such familial experience and reflections. It is important to understand that research on social relations *is made out of social relations* which develop within and between the multiple sites of researchers' 'expanded fields', including family (Crang and Cook, 2007:9). It is therefore subjective, but importantly so when understanding such issues in depth, so long as it is also reflexive.

4.4.3 Researcher

My role as a researcher was often blurred to others, and even to myself at times, particularly in straddling professional and researcher identities, which was challenging. As Rose (1997) suggests, it is almost impossible for researchers to fully locate themselves in research, and my multiple identities and interconnectedness were certainly barriers to this. At the same time that some of the findings challenged not only my beliefs, but my dual positionality and sense of responsibility over professional respondents, as discussed in section 4.4.1, it is important to recognise the significance of critical research and the privileged position this brings (Stake, 1995). This was something that I discussed with several professional participants as a result of my dual identity as professional and researcher, as the following extract from the field diary shows:

'I spoke to someone I was interviewing about [the opportunity to think in doing research] and I admitted that I feel privileged to be able to do this. They said that they talk about this a lot in a professional capacity – they do not have the opportunity to think about things due to the pressure to get things done. I remember that feeling of 'fire fighting' and feeling stifled and I need to continue to remember it as I go on with the research, because although it is a mess right now, it's an important mess which will become an understanding and can be used positively to inform the profession.'

(Field Diary, April 2015)

Continually reminding myself of the privilege of doing research and the importance of revealing critical findings has enabled me to navigate existential

predicaments in my positionality. The importance of speaking back to practice is at the heart of this research and is discussed further in section 4.6.

The multiple positions discussed here highlight the importance of recognising what 'knowledge' is being produced, my influence over it and also what gaps of understanding/wider knowledge or politics there are within this. The politics of doing research thereby merges with ethics (Smith, 2010), which is discussed in the following section.

4.5 Ethics and representation

Procedurally, the research followed the ESRC code of ethics and underwent ethical review in the Department of Geography at Durham University, confirmation of which is in the committee minutes at Appendix B. Interview and focus group participants signed a consent form which set out their agreement to contribute to the research, secure storage of recordings and transcriptions, and freedom to withdraw from the project at any point (Smith, 2010). Confidentiality was not guaranteed but it was stipulated that individuals would not be named. In the case of profession participants, their identity has been anonymised to the level of the strategic service that they work within³⁵ (a chart outlining the structure of Gateshead Council is included at Appendix E), but for senior professionals or politicians it was verbally explained that their role and responsibility may make them identifiable. My role as a researcher and prior role as a planner was explained to participants in advance of interviews and focus groups. However, only my role as a researcher was outlined to those who I informally interviewed through 'hanging around'. Whilst no formal consent was obtained from such participants, verbal agreement to talk to me was given and confidentiality was covered through their anonymity.

³⁵ Participants from the following services were interviewed: Economic and Housing Growth Service, Legal Democratic and Property Service, Culture, Communities, Leisure and Volunteering Service, Development and Public Protection Service.

Beyond the ethical procedures, the research continued to be guided both in the field and in analysis/writing through reflexivity; a principle advocated by Guillemin and Gillam (2004) in which the researcher is continually aware of their ethical responsibilities. As Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggest is often the case, several 'ethically important moments' occurred within the field, for which there is not necessarily a clear resolution, but the reflexivity and morality of researcher is relied upon (Smith, 2010). There were such particular moments when people revealed their sense of vulnerability in talking to me, be that about their housing situation or job security. One person also became visibly upset about personal issues when reflecting on their housing experiences. I also came across anger from people towards housing, at 'the council' or 'the government', landlords or 'others'.

At the time of interviewing I thought I was comfortable at exploring these issues with people to the extent that they themselves were. However, upon listening to the audio recordings and reading transcripts, I realised that instead of leaving these moments open for the participants to resolve, I instead went into comforting mode, or filling the gaps, which effectively shut down such delicate conversations. In hindsight I needed to be more confident to leave silences, but there is a balance to be made in not exploiting participants in order to reach new avenues of research. I was continually troubled by the inherent power relations of 'researcher' over people whom I was interviewing (Crang and Cook, 2007). However, I maintained a respect for them and their opinions and closed down situations I felt were unreasonable (i.e. the focus group with asylum seekers discussed in 4.2.5). I respected people's right to not have interviews recorded, or for aspects of what they said to remain confidential.

Relying upon my own reflexivity and morality, I have attempted a fair representation of voices as well as a range of voices in the research, and I have taken time to challenge my own understandings of others with whom I do not necessarily agree, in order to represent them fairly. However, I acknowledge that the embeddedness of myself in the research is subjective, political and the outcomes of this are most likely shaped accordingly. Despite being reflexive and

transparent, the choices about what to present to whom (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) are not always conscious (Mansvelt and Berg, 2005).

4.6 Dissemination and Right of Reply

The foundations of this research were built upon a critical reflection of planning practice and my experience of it, and my multiple identities and positions have strived to bring practice and academia into conversation. It is therefore important that the research is disseminated beyond academia, and particularly back to practice. There is a tension that the findings of the research are critical of local government practice and as such it is important that I find the correct mode of dissemination which is clear, transparent and creative (DeLyser and Pawson, 2005). It is important to make it clear as Cockburn (1977) did, that this is primarily a critique of the system within which individuals operate and that balancing the inherent contradictions within the state is not a critique of individuals themselves, again my dual identity as researcher and practitioner might help to make this clear.

I will be working with the Institute for Local Government at Durham University, presenting my findings to a wide audience of regional practitioners, as well as to academic audiences. I will also be providing a written report of key findings from the research to Gateshead Council, which I hope to discuss with them and to wider practice through the Royal Town Planning Institute. I will also produce articles for planning practice publications as well as academic journals.

4.7 Conclusion

Overall it is considered that the use of a single case study and the mixed methods approach were appropriate to the aims and research questions of this research. However, was I to repeat this research in a different location there are a number of lessons that I have learned. Firstly whilst the archival research was a vital part of the story of the place and useful in contextualising and deepening

understandings, I would plan a balance that gave yet more space to the contemporary understandings of place. Secondly I would not repeat formal focus groups on the same scale that was done here, but would instead undertake more informal and possibly briefer discussions with such groups, and use focus groups for more directed discussions that were more challenging. Thirdly I would be more comfortable and confident with the uncertainty or mess of the research process, and particularly with a more assured position as a researcher which would give me more separation than I had in researching this particular place and balancing multiple identities.

5 Housing Market Reconstruction: A Financializing and Self-Funding Local State?

5.1 Introduction

Having considered the fluid and complex relationship of the (local) state with housing and the housing market both locally in Chapter Two, and conceptually in Chapter Three, this chapter provides a closer examination of the relationship of the local state with the housing market in Bensham and Saltwell. In doing so, it takes up the call of Aalbers and Christophers (2014) to conceptualise housing in the contemporary capitalist political economy, and specifically to investigate the techniques used by the local state within the current economic climate. Here it firstly considers the way in which the housing market was *deconstructed* by the local state through the use of experts and evidence in the regeneration strategy Housing Market Renewal (HMR). It then goes on to consider the way in which a marketized philosophy established in HMR is currently being built upon to *reconstruct* the housing market under a public-private-partnership, analytically considered to form part of the local state. In doing so it answers RQ1: how does the local state understand and engage with the housing market?

It argues that the local state is increasingly embodied as a market actor which is moving beyond earlier forms of entrepreneurialism and employing a particular form of financialization '*of and through the state*' (Aalbers, 2016) in relation to housing provision. Finally the chapter will consider the potential to further intensify this mode of governing through an increased pressure upon the local states to become self-funding under austerity. As such the neighbourhood is understood to have undergone a journey of regeneration, which reveals the way in which the local state is being reconfigured and redirected, a theme which is central to this thesis. This chapter begins with considering how the housing market was understood to have failed.

5.2 Housing Market Failure: Experts and Evidence

Explanations of housing market failure in mainstream economics use qualitative assessments called a hedonic property model to estimate value when measured against social factors such as crime or environmental factors such as flood risk or earthquakes (Mueller et al, 2009). Understanding housing market failure from an economic perspective therefore balances the ability of a house to be sold along with various but specific external factors. HMR loosely relied on such economic understandings of housing market failure, but importantly strategically identified housing markets in need of renewing before carrying out detailed market assessments. As we saw in Chapter Three, the use of experts and evidence produced a discourse of decline through a 'theoretical jump' based on the conceptualisation of society in market terms (Webb, 2010).

Webb (2010) draws on Healy and Hillier's (2008) 'rational-scientific' approach to planning to critique the use of experts and the methodology for collecting evidence in HMR, which effectively forecast future areas of low demand (through identifying indicators to measure the size and trajectory of the problem). Webb highlights the problems of scientific diagnosis and solution to the housing market, which supports exclusive claims to knowledge, in what he calls a 'marketized philosophy' that underpins the interpretations of statistical results (Webb, 2010:318). Such a marketized perspective led to areas being deemed 'structurally uncompetitive' (See Ferrari 2007), and a business planning model was employed which identified characteristics of housing (and residents) that 'reduce the attractiveness of neighbourhoods to households in the market for housing' (Webb, 2010:319). A comparison of socio-economic data and housing profile information was drawn across various locations, and low demand was identified through six indicators: a predominance of rented accommodation, a predominance of 'low quality' owner occupied stock, a predominance of houses with the same number of bedrooms, a prevalence of flatted or terraced housing, the existence of many older residents and high unemployment. Webb (2010) claims that the selection of indicators and the methodology applied in measuring these limited the causal conclusions drawn in understanding certain housing

being uncompetitive in the market place. Furthermore, this is understood as a package of political values and judgements, which is rebranded as objective due to its reliance on 'scientific evidence'.

As we saw in Chapter Three, the growth of business interest under 'new public management' and 'entrepreneurialism' (Peck, 1995) led to what was understood to be a hollowing out of the state (Jessop, 2004). The resulting loss of faith in the public sector (Tewdwr Jones, 2012), and an ideological attack on the planning profession specifically (Davoudi and Madanipour, 2015), were the conditions under which out-sourcing to external (private) consultants and experts was increasingly relied upon. This has been defined by some as a 'consultocracy' (McCann, 2001), where the use of consultants within public sector became normalised. Public-private-partnerships were a technique of such contractual governance, termed new contractualism (Raco, 2013b), which refers to the patterns and structures of governing through contracted partnerships (Jayasuriya, 2002). This form of governance is understood to move towards privatisation (Swyngedouw, 2009) and has been referred to as hyper-entrepreneurial capitalism (Stark, 2009), which arguably strips away public agency in favour of private control (Jayasuriya, 2002). Whilst work has been done which critically considers the impact of long term contracts (Raco, 2013a, b), importantly Prince (2012) and Parker and Street (forthcoming, 2017) argue that this is not a one way process, with consultants being employed for particular purposes. Instead there is a need to understand how such knowledge and expertise is used and the relations between actors that reveal the politics and agency in decision making. Parker and Street (forthcoming, 2017) argue that more work is needed to understand the detail of such co-produced systems, which moves beyond the binary of public=good, private=bad, towards a nuanced understanding of political agendas and agency.

What is clear is that the scale of involvement of the private sector in many sectors of local government, but particularly in planning (see Parker et al, 2014; Davoudi and Madanipour, 2015) is on an increasing trajectory, and especially so with the introduction of 2016 Housing and Planning Act, which further opens the

sector up to privatization (Raco et al, 2016). The remainder of this chapter is divided into two parts; the following sections provide a close analysis of the use of evidence and experts in deconstructing the housing market under HMR, and latter sections consider how the current private public partnership builds on the established marketised philosophy of expert evidence whereby the local state (in partnership) is revealed to be (re)constructing the housing market.

5.3 A Marketized Approach to Deconstructing the Housing Market

‘Its not just that one thing that influences the decisions, it’s got to be about what makes sense, what’s the business case. There are hundreds of background documents that all came together on housing market intelligence to say that looks and feels the right way forward’

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, February 2014)

This section will critically consider key reports produced by different consultants that made up the evidence base, which ultimately established housing market failure in Bensham and Saltwell, as well as drawing on empirical findings from interviews. The *hundreds of backgrounds documents* referred to above were not all accessible for various reasons ³⁶, but a review of those that were is summarized in Appendix C. These documents fed into the production of the Neighbourhood Action Plan (hereafter NAP) which consists of a map (seen earlier in Chapter Two, Figure 7) and an executive summary produced by property agents GVA Grimley who ‘specialise in neighbourhood planning’ (GVA Grimley, 2006a: 3). Analysing these documents provides us with an understanding of how the housing market was understood and presented as failing.

³⁶ Some documents were said to be internal working documents and not therefore publically available, others were not locatable due to the time frame that has since passed. Certain documents are more public facing than others, with a limited amount of detail. The reason given for this was that some documents were ‘too big and bulky to be useable, people would never really read it, they just wanted to know what the gist of it’ (Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth). The implications of the level of information made public will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

A 'sustainability matrix' in the Bensham and Saltwell Neighbourhood Housing Analysis report produced by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) (undated) examined a range of self-selected variables³⁷, which when combined are said to produce an indicator of stable or weak housing markets, although justification for the selection of variables is not provided. The variables selected produce higher scores for areas which have a high degree of social and private rented properties, lower house prices and higher scores of multiple deprivation. The housing market is therefore defined as being 'successful' through having a higher degree of owner occupation, higher house prices, and lower deprivation. Calculating the strength of the market in this way reveals a specific, qualitative and subjective view of housing, which promotes home ownership, value and economic indicators above alternative housing tenures or understandings, in line with Webb (2010) and Allen's (2008) findings. The use of the term 'sustainability' in the production of this matrix is also important and highlights how such a term is employed with a narrow economic (or neoliberal) focus on markets (see Cook and Swyngedouw, 2012).

A deeper understanding of how the selected variables in the sustainability matrix were evaluated and subsequently combined with other non-market assessments is provided in the following sections. These have been organised in terms of the relevant evidence of local supply and demand indicators that are used to assess the overall housing market.

5.3.1 Market Perceptions of Housing Supply: Aestheticizing Tyneside Flats

We had hundreds of them, [Tyneside flats] they were concentrated in particular parts of Bensham and Saltwell and in many cases they were in really poor condition. So in order to create a much more robust housing market and also to have that variety and availability of accommodation to create a much more rounded community it was felt the right thing to do to get 21st century standards, build standards, family homes.

(Respondent in Culture, Communities and Volunteering, March 2015)

³⁷ The following variables were identified: Index of multiple deprivation (2004), benchmarking of house prices against Gateshead average (2005), long term and short term voids (2005), private Rented % (2005), social Rented % (2005).

The supply-side of the housing market was analysed through three criteria: the type of houses, their condition and the tenure types. As we saw in Chapter Two, the neighbourhood has a predominance of older (pre-1919) terraced houses and Tyneside flats in Bensham and Saltwell, which accounts for 88% of the housing stock (42% are flats). This housing type is understood to be problematic because it restricts choice and diversity for existing residents, and results in a high proportion of single people and couples living in the area. Although the house type is said to be 'an enduring and sustainable product' (GVA Grimley, 2006b: 35), and 'enable[s] those people who can not afford to buy elsewhere to get on the property ladder' (NLP, undated: 1.48), its presence in such quantity is said to be a driver of decline because of its influence on the demographic and socio-economic composition of the neighbourhood. It is therefore seen to be at risk of becoming a 'down market product' (GVA Grimley, 2006b:35), and more modern housing alternatives are required. Many interview respondents suggested that Tyneside flats were *not aspirational* or were *old fashioned*, which led to people moving out of the area due to a lack of housing choice. This understanding mirrors a shift in narrative within government publications on HMR; from 'end of life' and 'obsolete' to 'out-dated stock', found in research by Andrea Armstrong (2010).

Despite serving a function and a need for existing residents, the housing is problematized for not meeting the aspirations of future, potential residents, and can therefore be seen to be driven by particular social positions that render Tyneside flats obsolete (Allen, 2008). The experience and understandings of residents who are said to be driving demand (through public consultation) will be considered in Chapter Seven. But this logic of altering housing supply as a result of a potential or perceived demand for an alternative housing type is something that one officer questioned when asked about Tyneside flats being demolished:

'I don't know why they don't work anymore (sighs). They are not a modern layout for a house. The rooms are either bigger or smaller as opposed to all the same size. You have high ceilings, bigger windows, smaller kitchens, yards not gardens, which can appeal to some and not to

others. I don't know. I don't know how much of the issue with that is we're told what we want by volume house builders, TV programmes, do you know what I mean?'

(Respondent in Development and Public Protection, March 2015)

Whilst conforming to the locally established narrative of housing not being modern, the respondent also suggests that the demand for change is perhaps being driven by house builders and cultural influences more widely; it's a fashion or desire, rather than a need. This supports Zukin's (1998) process of 'aestheticisation', where markets, and cities more widely, are shaped for consumption as opposed to production, becoming a driver for gentrification.

Aesthetics were particularly important in considering the second factor of housing supply: the housing condition. The Urban Design, Heritage and Character Report (GVA Grimley, 2006b) evaluated the physical strengths and weaknesses of the neighbourhood through a 'rapid assessment' of the visual condition of housing. Looking at house frontages only, it considered the state of repair, boundary treatment, window frames, doors, walls, guttering, evidence of personalisation and general impression of lintels, pointing, paintwork etc.; criteria set by GVA Grimley. This overall *impression* of housing was categorised as either good, fair, poor or very poor and averaged at a block level (one side of a street). The report acknowledged that averaging the condition of housing in blocks will mask poor buildings in well maintained blocks and vice versa. However it was considered that this method 'captures the external impression that underpin market perceptions' (GVA Grimley, 2006b:19). This is explained in a little more detail below:

In any neighbourhood, the visual appearance of housing condition is a key determinant of market appeal and demand. It is a sign of the capacity and/or the willingness of owners to maintain their property, and thus an important function of market confidence. Individuals and investors will feel safer putting their households and their money somewhere that looks likely to be maintained, than risking them somewhere that appears to be deteriorating. Likewise, existing owners will keep their properties in good repair if neighbours are doing the same.

(GVA Grimley, 2006b:19)

Here the appearance of houses is directly linked to market appeal, and visually poor housing is seen to be a financial risk and deterrent to individuals or investors. Assessing housing in this way therefore supports Rex and Moore's (1967) theory of housing class, where the housing market is defined by criteria set by different 'gate keepers', in this case property agents GVA Grimley. The assessment was carried out from the perspective of potential residents or investors, rather than from the point of view of existing residents who occupy or own the houses. The fact that the visual appearance is understood to determine market appeal and provide market confidence reveals an understanding of the market within what Allen (2008) described as *a space of positions*; a view of the housing market from a social position.

The visual assessment exercise produced a plan (Figure 8), which identified a spatial concentration of blocks in visually poor condition. These blocks were almost all Tyneside Flats which had not benefitted from the previous investment programmes in the past that we saw in Chapter Two. The spatial concentration of properties in poor or very poor appearance contributed to understandings of housing market function and informed the identification of blocks to be demolished.

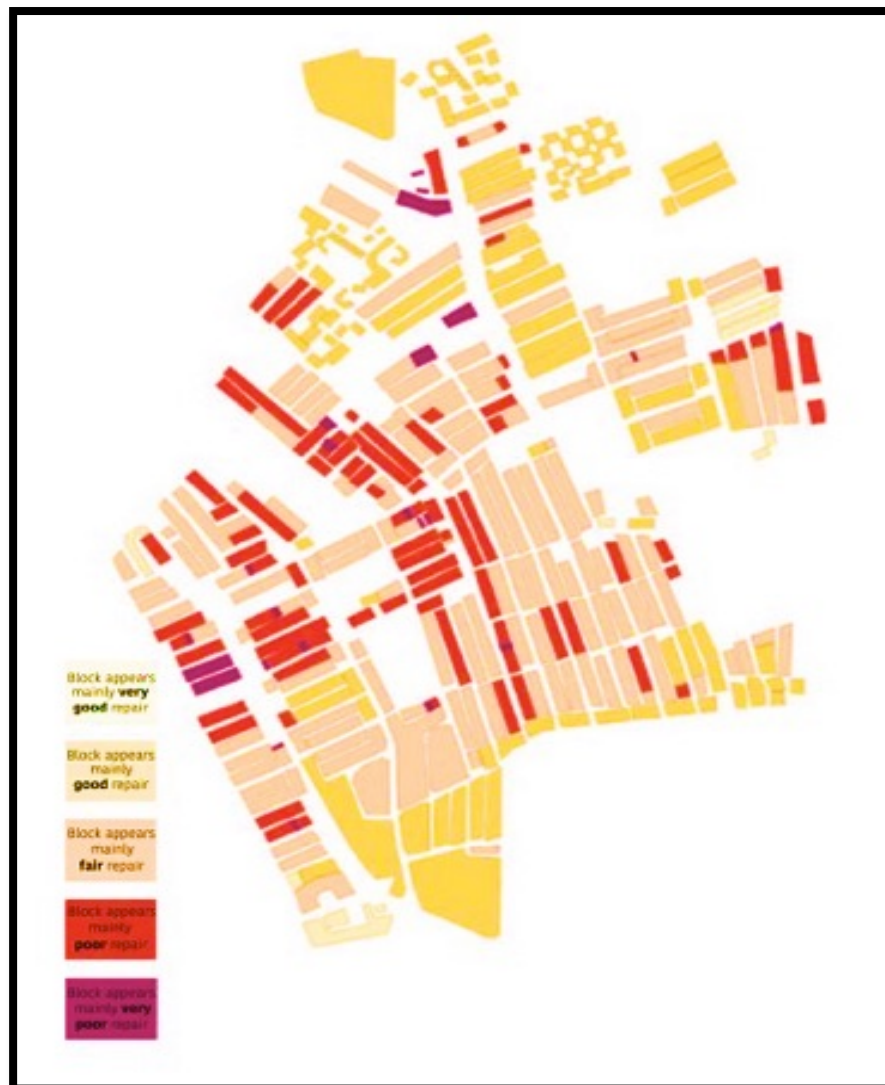
The prevalence of housing that looks predominantly poor in the remaining north-west segment is a pressing strategic problem for the area. Although our survey was external only, the harsh reality is that there is genuine housing deprivation for residents. The visual assessment at the very least shows that a large section of the neighbourhood's population live in streets that create a poor impression to visitors, stigmatising them and their homes, and acting as a deterrent to market led investment.

(GVA Grimley, 2006b: 19-20)

Importantly there were no internal inspections of the houses or structural assessments carried out, so the proposition here that 'genuine housing deprivation' exists is an unsubstantiated claim drawn from a brief external visual assessment. Again we can see that the visual assessment has drawn conclusions of the area as visually poor from the position of an external 'visitor', rather than from residents themselves (a similar finding was observed in Allen's (2008)

study in Liverpool). There is an active valuing of aesthetics that is highly selective; a politics of seeing that is driven by 'expert' values and perceptions of the place, above the needs of people living in them (Mitchell, 2003).

Figure 8: Average visual condition of properties by block
GVA Grimley (2006b:22)



Furthermore, it is then suggested that such impressions stigmatise both the residents and their homes, with the report going on to say that some streets have become stigmatised 'possibly beyond redemption' (GVA Grimley, 2006b:35), a term in itself judgemental or even moralising. It would appear, however, that the report, by superficially assessing the external appearance of properties, categorising blocks and linking this to market appeal, not only results in a theoretical jump (Webb, 2010) to understanding future market demand, but is

also actually stigmatising the existing housing and residents themselves from the point of view of potential residents, or the potential market. By rendering the housing unattractive to future buyers, the evidence is building up a case for demolition through socially and territorially stigmatising blocks of houses and their residents. That housing and residents are problematised on the basis that they act as a deterrent to market-led investment reveals that it is a marketized philosophy which is driving this superficial assessment of houses. Since Tyneside Flats remain a popular type of house in more 'desirable' areas in the region this begs the question as to how far the market problematisation is about people rather than housing. This not only resonates with more contemporary work on spatial fixes relying on pathological rationalisations (Wacquant, 2008; Tyler, 2013) to undertake state-led gentrification (Glynn, 2009; Imrie et al, 2009; MacLeod and Johnstone, 2012), but it also reminds us that little has changed since Alderman Dunn's declaration in 1899 that 'dirty people make dirty houses' (cited in Manders, 1973:171) as we saw in Chapter Two, save for the judgement most recently being positioned more explicitly on the place, and more subtly on the people.

The report includes a caveat that the visual assessment is 'not intended as a substitute for full survey inspections' (GVA Grimley, 2006b:19). Nonetheless, at no point were any structural surveys carried out as part of the evidence base for HMR, and yet the narrative of the housing being 'poor quality' and 'structurally unsound' took hold from this brief external impression. It became a justification from a professional point of view, but also an accepted view politically, and from some residents as the below interview extracts highlight:

'these properties were absolutely shot'

(Respondent in Culture, Communities and Volunteering, March 2015)

'[we had to]remove the obsolete, or the down right off-putting housing'

(Respondent in Gateshead Regeneration Partnership, January 2016)

'they were built for the ship builders and the heavy industry, they were chucked up, they are not aspirational...bog standard'

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, February 2014)

‘the properties that we have taken out through the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder were some of the lower grade Tyneside Flat properties’

(Member of Parliament for Gateshead, March 2015)

‘some of the stock was so far gone, you know the market would just not support and sustain bringing them back into use’

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, April 2015)

‘I think some of them were that run down that I think it would have cost too much to repair them’

(Local charity worker, March 2015)

‘they weren’t well built in the first place’

(Respondent from a local church, March 2015)

We can therefore see that the shallow visual assessment of housing was successful in creating a discourse of decline (Webb, 2010) locally, and potentially alongside the shift in narrative of central government publications, and influential academic advocates of HMR (See Armstrong, 2010; Allen, 2008, MacLeod and Johnson 2012). This changing discourse is important because it moves from being a specific problem with housing condition and vacancy, to become a more general problem with the housing stock. In this case, the grading of the external appearance of buildings, and labelling of some block as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ has come to be understood as the houses being *lower grade, far gone, beyond repair, and not aspirational*.

In drawing on the GVA Grimley (2006b) rapid visual assessment, another report; the Bensham and Saltwell Neighbourhood Housing Analysis report (NLP, undated: 1.22) attempts to supplement this with ‘hard evidence’ of housing condition by citing a Private Sector Stock Condition survey which was carried out in 2002 for the whole of the NewcastleGateshead pathfinder area. Whilst the NLP report acknowledges that detailed evidence regarding Bensham and Saltwell cannot be derived from this report, it then goes on to state that:

‘It should be noted however, that this survey did pick out significant levels of unfitness and disrepair across the pathfinder area as a whole within older terraced stock, the majority of which is located within the Bensham and Saltwell neighbourhood. Bearing this in mind it would then seem reasonable to assume that the level of unfitness and disrepair within Bensham and Saltwell may actually be quite substantial.’

(NLP, undated: 1.22)

The application of this sub-regional report at the geographical level of this neighbourhood (alongside the acknowledgment that such a detailed application is not possible) is done on the tenuous *assumption* that unfitness and disrepair can be attributed to Bensham and Saltwell because the majority of terraced stock is located there. The presence of terraced housing however is not unique to this neighbourhood, but is found in many neighbourhoods across the North. The claim therefore that this is ‘hard evidence’ is far from accurate.

The final point in considering housing supply is the tenure type. We saw in Chapter Two that the neighbourhood has long provided private rental properties, which remain in high levels today. The statistics provided in the HMR evidence suggest that 29% of properties are rented privately (taken from the 2001 census), which is said to be concentrated in excess of 40% in certain areas, or pockets (GVA Grimley, 2006a). Some private renting in this neighbourhood is described as housing of last resort:

‘When I talk to people in housing who are like housing experts in London, and they think oh the private rented sector is booming blah blah. You have to remember in this area the private rented sector is housing of last resort you know...for a lot of people.’

(Member of Parliament for Gateshead, March 2015)

This interview excerpt shines a light on the profoundly uneven geography of housing across the UK, although there is a national pattern of housing standards within the ‘bottom end’ of the private rental market often being poor, particularly in older terraced housing (Mullins and Murie, 2006) and worsening (Dorling, 2014), there are particular geographic concentrations of this tenure type being housing of last resort. However, the private rental sector is not being

problematised as a result of the housing conditions for residents, it is understood as a problem because it is a barrier to the market for private ownership.

This scale of private renting is understood to be problematic in the Neighbourhood Action Plan simply because it 'restricts the lack of choice for owner occupiers' (GVA Grimley, 2006a:7). The problem of private renting can therefore be understood to be driven by the preference of home ownership above renting and a specific marketized view of housing. Private renting at this scale, despite providing affordable housing for many people with little other alternative, is understood as a barrier to the housing market. Despite not featuring in the evidence, the narrative of poor housing conditions for residents³⁸ is offered by local authority officers as justification; linking private rents with low value and poor housing conditions:

'We saw that traditional cycle of landlords buying up lots of property, unfortunately some of them were somewhat disreputable, they used to put in poor tenants, those tenants would drive out the neighbours, they would buy out their neighbours property, so they were kind of manipulating the market to acquire property at low values, but what happened is that cycle resulted in areas which were increasingly unpopular, and not only to owner occupiers but private renters as well, so you had this cycle of decline.'

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, April 2015)

This again supports Webb's (2010) neighbourhood decline discourse, in this case a cycle of decline is understood to position low-return housing as a problem, thereby contributing to the perceived risk of housing abandonment. This discourse of decline was presented by many local authority respondents through blame; to both private rental landlords (as above), but also to residents themselves, which will be more fully discussed in Chapter Seven. As Webb

³⁸ It should be noted that housing conditions in the private rental sector were anecdotally found to be problematic, with several residents I spoke to describing poor living conditions, and a reluctance on landlords part to remedy this. Gateshead Council have also taken steps in Bensham and Saltwell to overcome a the problem of private landlords through designating the areas as a Selective Landlord Licensing scheme, which requires all private landlords to hold a license that gives control over the management and safety of properties, and the suitability of landlords to manage them. Licensing areas are designated in areas that have low demand and/or significant or persistent anti-social behavior.

(2010) suggests, such a discourse is dangerous because it justifies intervention in housing and reconstructs residents' interests (both existing and potential) inline with the marketized philosophy of HMR agenda. Positioning private renters as problematic in deterring homeowners resonates with earlier understandings in Gateshead over a hundred years ago; that renters should not be given 'the same privileges as ordinary citizens' (Affleck, 1906, cited in Manders 1973:171).

What can be taken from considering the supply-side 'evidence' of HMR is that a clear marketized philosophy is being employed, which promotes home ownership above all else. Of the three supply-side indicators considered (housing type, tenure and condition), it is the tenuous visual assessments of housing condition (GVA Grimley 2006b) that went on to provide a strong local discourse of decline, being heavily drawn upon in a range of related documents that correlate areas in poor condition with weak housing markets (Bensham and Saltwell Neighbourhood Housing Analysis (NLP, undated); Executive Summary (GVA Grimley, 2006a). This assessment was also successful in influencing the local narrative of housing being in poor condition across the board; politically, professionally and publically. This is important in revealing not only the construction of a narrative of housing within the local state; problematizing existing housing supply as failing, but it also highlights the way in which experts and evidence have been drawn upon to co-produce this understanding. The following section goes on to consider the indicators of housing demand.

5.3.2 Deconstructing Demand: Value, Turnover and Empty Houses

There is no single model of housing demand (Isaac, et al., 1991), but it was measured in HMR in terms of house value, turnover and voids (empty houses). Taking the latter point first, the NAP Executive Summary sets out that low demand housing is a profound problem in the targeted de-industrialized areas of HMR, and this is indicated through areas suffering from large amounts of abandoned homes. However:

‘in other areas like Gateshead the problem is less visible, although no less serious. Here, the housing market is failing because of limited choice and poor quality in housing.’

(GVA Grimley, 2006a:3)

Here we can see that whilst empty homes is said to be problematic across pathfinder areas strategically, it is less of a problem locally in Gateshead, where instead market failure is being framed - as we have seen in earlier sections -on limited choice (as a result of the predominance of Tyneside Flats, and private rents), and poor housing quality (based on the limited external visual assessment of buildings).

Whilst vacancy rates in this neighbourhood are said to be higher than average in the NAP Executive Summary (at 8.4% as opposed to 3.65% for the borough), these statistics are drawn from the NLP Neighbourhood Housing Analysis, which differentiates between long term void rates and short term void rates. However the NAP Executive Summary (the distilled version of this evidence base) fails to present information to this level, which may be misleading and perhaps exaggerating the situation.

An interview with a respondent in Economic and Housing Growth (January, 2015) on void rates revealed that whilst there are pockets of higher vacancy rates in the neighbourhood this was ‘because the density is so high, it’s different’. This differentiation in housing density is not something that is accounted for in the statistics presented in the evidence, although the NLP report acknowledges that the rates could be a result of gaps between lettings, or properties undergoing refurbishment. However, only the higher than average void rates are presented in the public facing NAP Executive Summary.

Locally, empty houses are not seen as a problem in the area by residents, or some local politicians:

I: What about empty homes, is that a problem?

W1: Well they say it is, but sometimes it's very difficult to know where an empty- which is empty you know...but for me, I didn't feel it was as bad as initially people said it was.

W2: I don't think so, I mean I never see any empty properties, well not many.

W1 : ...I think its an issue, but I don't think its as bad as some people make it out to be

(Ward Councillors W1 and W2, March 2015)

However, professionally, it is maintained to be a problem by some respondents:

'20% of these areas are empty, there was nobody in them'

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, February 2014)

'Some of the streets were basically fully empty'

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, April 2015)

Despite the acknowledgement that there is not an acute problem of empty properties in this neighbourhood, and that 'most housing is occupied' (GVA Grimley, 2006a: 3), empty properties have nonetheless been presented as being more problematic than they are within the evidence, leading to a professional understanding (in opposition to a local one) of it as a concern.

Low demand is understood to exist, indicated not so much through empty properties as in other areas, but by house prices being low (GVA Grimley, 2006a). Even though evidence in the NAP Executive Summary (GVA Grimley 2006a: 9) reveals that house prices in Bensham and Saltwell have increased considerably (160%) over recent years, they have remained consistently below the wider Gateshead's average and the national average (with a widening gap) (As Table 1 and Figure 9 indicate). This is seen as problematic, and in need of realigning.

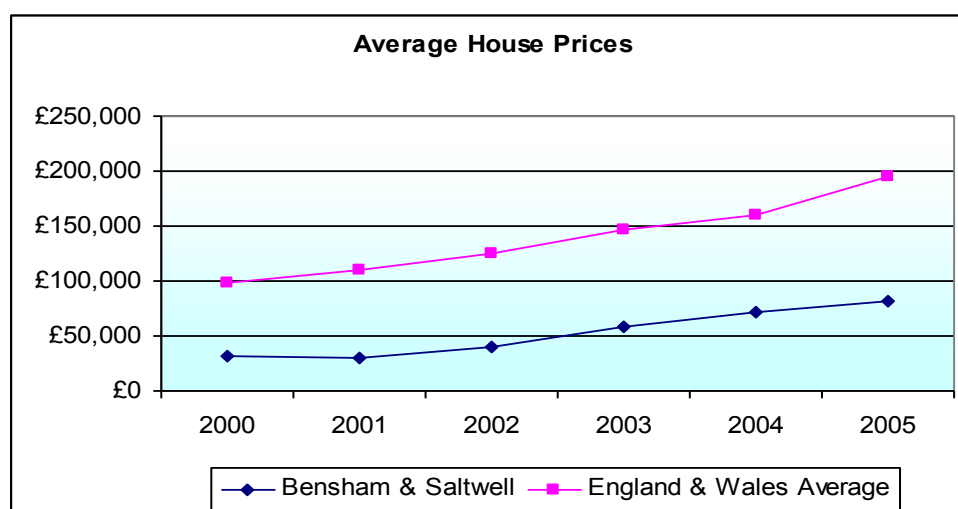
Table 1: The Bensham and Saltwell Housing Market:

Source: Land Registry 2006 (Up to the third quarter for 2005) cited in NLP (undated:1.34)

	Average Price 2000	Sales	Average Price 2001	Sales	Average Price 2002	Sales	Average Price 2003	Sales	Average Price 2004	Sales	Average Price 2005	Sales
England and Wales	£98,682		£109,734		£124,237		£146,130		£160,164		£194,589	
Gateshead	£55,229	..	£62,501	..	£71,723	..	£91,878	..	£112,136	..	£117,683	
Bensham & Saltwell	£31,471	190	£30,190	239	£40,816	469	£58,028	573	£71,614	366	£81,757	286

Figure 9: Average House Prices

Source: HM Land Registry 2005, cited in NLP, undated: 1.35



Despite the dominant (professional) view of the housing market in this neighbourhood not having kept up with the pace of the market more widely, opposing understandings of this view of the market were also found:

I mean as far as prices go, I mean when you talk about housing market and value, I really struggled in the beginning I think when they said we want the prices of the houses to go up, and I am thinking, why would we really want that?...I struggle with the market, I don't think the market should lead stuff anyway, I don't think it's the solution to all issues.

(Ward Councillor, March 2015)

This view of the housing market and value specifically resists the dominant view of being towards housing (as market-led), in line with Allen's (2008) findings. So

whilst the evidence of housing demand through house price comparison takes a marketized view of housing which negates local understandings, or housing needs, as found by Webb (2010) in HMR more broadly, importantly this reveals that the established marketized view of the local state is not unified. There are fractures within the local state's understanding of housing, which is a point we will return to in Chapter Six.

The geographical scale at which house prices are considered is also worth noting. The public facing NAP Executive Summary charts the house price changes in sub areas of the neighbourhood which identified pockets of lower growth and lower values in some areas, and above average growth and value in other areas (predominantly around Saltwell Park). The NLP Neighbourhood Housing Analysis report, however considered house price changes at a street level (see Figure 10). House prices inherently vary as a result of localised differences in building types, quality, style, or even reputation (see Couch et al 2015).

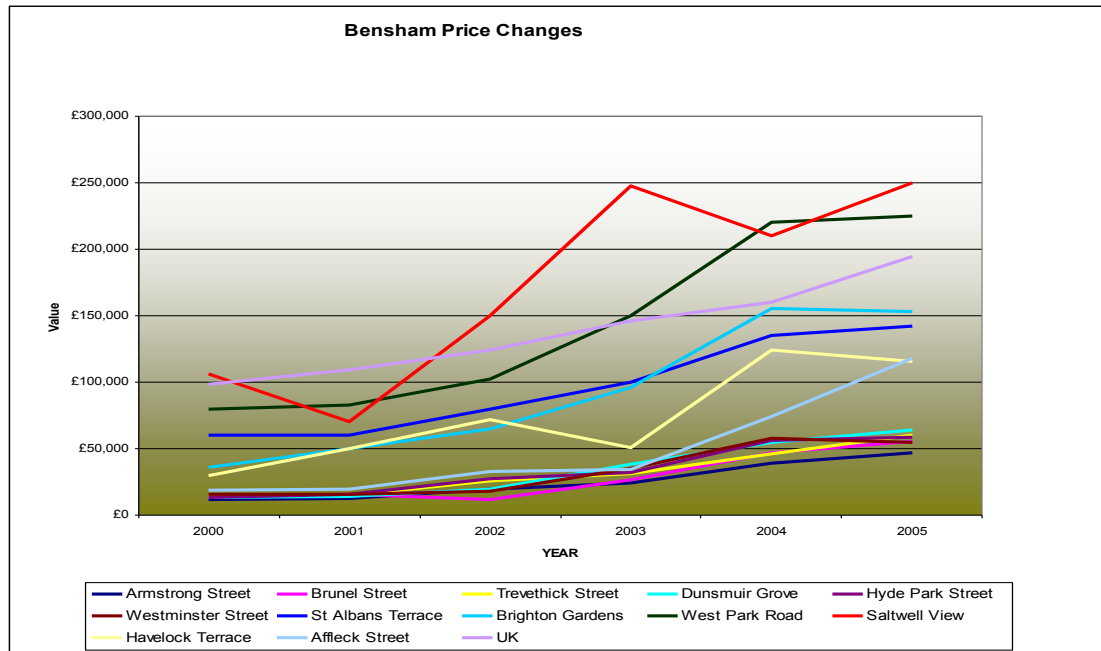
There were some market difference between streets, you could have streets that were 200m apart where there was some significant difference in terms- identical property type, but marked differences in value.

(Member of Parliament for Gateshead, March, 2015)

Market failure, weakness or vulnerability is therefore attributed to pockets, or streets with lower house prices (as well as the correlating evidence from the visual assessment and sustainability matrix). Importantly, the evidence of these localised housing markets is based purely on quantitative data, and a superficial visual assessment, with no understanding of local difference or interrogation of the qualitative nature of neighbourhoods which Couch et al (2015) considers to be necessary in understanding housing markets.

Figure 10: Bensham House Price Changes

Source: NLP, undated: 1.39



In terms of turnover, the final indicator of demand, house sales are shown to have reduced since 2003, which was used as evidence that ‘there has been a drop in demand for properties’ (GVA Grimley, 2006a:9). What is neglected to be considered here are two potential alternative understandings; firstly that a reduction in sales could conversely be read as a more stable market, where people are living there longer with less churn; and secondly, by this stage the neighbourhood had been announced as being a HMR pathfinder area, which may have impacted on the sales and affected the housing market.

Overall, although demand has been measured in terms of empty properties, house prices and turnover, there is not a particular problem with empty properties or even significant turnover, but primarily demand is understood to be a problem of low house prices. Whilst the value of properties in the neighbourhood was rising, it was not rising sufficiently in comparison to other areas, most likely because of the predominance of relatively cheaper Tyneside flats. A lower house price was therefore the dominant justification under a marketized philosophy to require intervention that replaced such housing with more expensive properties (with higher council tax rates). That these were not

necessarily affordable for the existing residents³⁹, was exactly the point; to attract new ones. Whilst the evidence used here is specific to the neighbourhood and presents a different technical argument made to justify HMR in Liverpool, for example, the result is producing a middle-class driven marketized philosophy found by others such as Cameron (2006), Allen (2008), Webb (2010).

5.3.3 The Fallacy of Failure

I think when we had so many empty properties in the area, and that is why we went down the Market Renewal Pathfinder route was because, property value was falling because of so many empty properties cheek by jowl with where people were living. And therefore what we were trying to do is bring some rebalance into the market.

(Member of Parliament for Gateshead, March 2015)

Reviewing the evidence base for HMR in this neighbourhood, alongside qualitative interviews has revealed how 'expert' consultants holding marketized understandings of housing and hegemonic views of the housing market more broadly have influenced housing intervention under HMR. What cannot be claimed in this thesis is a nuanced understanding of the relations between the consultants and the local authority; of where exactly the power behind decision making lay (Parker and Street, forthcoming 2017). This is largely because HMR began over a decade prior to this PhD commencing; and this, alongside the regularity of staff turnover makes it a difficult area to research, something that was outlined in Chapter Four.

As the previous quote from the member of Parliament reveals, there was a strong narrative established locally, which was not necessarily based in evidence, but the presentation of such 'knowledge' was successful in establishing a local narrative and justification. Despite houses being occupied, and house prices rising in the neighbourhood, the market was still understood as not keeping up to pace with other areas, and the evidence base therefore builds up a case for the demolition of certain streets by constructing the housing market as being weak.

³⁹ The average price of a Tyneside flat which was demolished was £70,000 and the starting price for a new three bedroom terraced house is £160,000, which is unaffordable for many existing residents

This weakness in the market, was understood as a *risk* of market failure, and despite only being called a ‘failing market’ once in the distilled public facing NAP Executive Summary (GVA Grimley 2006a), the narrative of failure took hold amongst professionals and politicians, who referred to it repeatedly as ‘failed’ or ‘broken’, a notion which as Raco (2013a) suggests, is misleading.

It is clear that the evidence has been constructed from a marketized perspective, which effectively deconstructed the existing housing market and is not therefore an objective, scientific, or entirely innocent exercise, but highlights the degree to which the local authority have become embedded within the housing market. The rolling out of delivery focused agendas through expert-led governance (Raco et al, 2016) has narrowed understandings of the place and instead established a discourse of decline, which becomes self-fulfilling. It is perhaps an example of Ranciere’s (2005:9) ‘politics of the possible’ where realism is presented through experts who define and adhere to what exactly is possible (understood as deliverable). Whilst revealing a marketized understanding of housing as a deliverable, these findings also highlight the way in which discourses are established and produced within and beyond (through the use of expert evidence) the local state, but despite their dominance and perceived practicability, they are not unified within the state. The following section goes on to consider how the established marketized perspective was fully absorbed into the local state in the subsequent public private partnership, which sought to (re)construct the housing market.

5.4 Reconstructing The Housing Market through a Joint Venture Partnership

The absence of national regeneration programmes or policies from 2011 onwards combined with the Coalition government’s austerity localism (Featherstone et al 2012), wider economic recession and stalled HMR programme were conditions under which Gateshead Council felt that it had to take a new and alternative approach to regeneration. The rationale for entering

into the GRP was given by many officers and managers fundamentally as a lack of choice, and a need to build houses and regenerate areas in a recession.

Whilst there was a strong narrative of the partnership being an innovative and creative solution to housing delivery, several respondents also referred to it enabling them not to be reliant on 'government hand outs' (Respondents from Gateshead Regeneration Partnership and Economic and Housing Growth). This understanding of dependency on central government highlights the on-going central-local tension over state financing, service provision, decision-making and ultimately autonomy and power. Yet it is also a clear shift in discourse from that of needing central state support under HMR as we saw earlier in Chapter Two. This shift could be related to austerity and localism and the demand to do more at a local level with less central funding. It could also speak to the new public management discourse and practice; the local entrepreneurial/corporatist state which encourages partnership working. The language of dependency and the rejection of it in place of a perceived need for entrepreneurial governance had taken hold locally and is being deployed here in order to legitimise the partnership in the current political-economic climate.

Following on from the active deconstruction of the housing market under HMR, the following sections pick up the discussion in Chapter Three, which conceptualised partnership and business interests as being drafted into the local state (Leitner, 1990; Peck, 1995), and planners being embedded within the housing market, which itself is a social construction (Healey, 1998). It considers how the housing market in this neighbourhood (and beyond) is now being reconstructed through the Gateshead Regeneration Partnership (GRP), which includes nineteen sites (70 hectares) across the borough. The long term nature of the partnership, which aims to build 2,400 homes in phases over the next 15 to 20 years and its relationship to the housing market will be considered, alongside the relations between actors within the local state (Henneberry and Parris, 2013). It is argued that in this post-crash austerity time, we are witnessing a reorientation of the local state that builds upon, but importantly begins to move

into the latter stages of entrepreneurialism and marketization and into the realms of housing financialization.

5.4.1 A Financializing Local State?

Having seen in Chapter Three (and earlier in this chapter) the embeddedness of the local state within the housing market, this section considers Aalbers' (2016) conceptualisation of the changes to the housing system as 'financialization *of and through* the state'(ibid:4). Here the dominance of markets and financial actors result in the state (in this case at a local level) becoming reliant upon them, and simultaneously transforming them. Picking up the debate in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.3) on the nexus of financialization and the local state, the following sections situate research findings within these debates, to consider the extent to which the GRP partnership is shaping the local state (and market relations) and whether or not it can be considered to be a vehicle for financialization, deepening the marketized approach to housing established under HMR.

5.4.2 Shaping Local State Agency in Market Reconstruction

I don't think there is any fear of trying to influence the market. I think certainly this came out of HMR and part of HMR was to overcome areas of market failure...[where houses] were either owned or managed by the people who weren't, you know, looking out for the best interests in those homes. So the Council had to step in and try and change the market in Bensham and Saltwell...to overcome something that was only going in one direction, and that was down, and I don't think you could have relied on the market to go in and improve an edge of centre location. So I think very much the Council is saying we have to change the market in this location.

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, January 2015)

There is an awareness of the local state's active role in the (re)construction of the housing market, and the view that the market cannot be *relied* upon to act alone, but necessitates local state intervention. There also remains the neoliberal logic that a new market is the solution to a 'failed' market (Lave et al 2010; Crouch, 2011) and agency is still afforded to abstract understandings of 'market forces prevail[ing]' (Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, April 2015). Getting

‘the market to come’ (ibid) to the neighbourhood reveals an understanding of new housing bringing with it a new market, external to the existing one:

‘Creating a different housing market, a more sustainable housing market, so we get a much happier suit of residents and investors in the area’

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, January 2015)

This is important as it moves beyond Allen’s (2008) understanding of different social class positions (and understandings) within the market for housing, and suggests housing is being seen as having multiple markets for different people. The rhetoric of the new market being *sustainable* is again employed in a narrow sense to understand higher house prices as being good for the area which in turn will create *happier* residents and investors; economic gain is seen to lead to social gain. Whilst this speaks directly to Rex and Moore’s (1967) theory of housing class, and Allen’s differentiation of middle class housing markets, and working class dwellings, it offers the opportunity to extend this understanding into separate markets. The existing market is understood as a *residual* market for those who continue to need private rent, or cheap home ownership, and the creation of a new and alternative market is being produced for the middle/home owning class.

It is widely held amongst professional participants that going into partnership was the only option to secure housing regeneration; to take control and have a ‘direct role in delivery’ (Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, April 2015), to become self sufficient in regeneration, without government hand outs, as we saw earlier. As Peck and Whitehead (2015) found, this attitude is intensified under periods of austerity and the withdrawal of central regeneration policy or funding was an opportunity to use the partnership as the regeneration strategy across the borough in putting nineteen sites into the portfolio. The only alternative to the partnership considered was accessing central government funding for a housing zone, which offered the local authority preferential loan rates. However, ‘even those preferred rates are not as attractive as we could get commercially’ (Respondent in GRP, September 2015). Therefore the partnership allowed for a combination of sites that were heavily constrained (such as

contaminated brownfield sites) together with sites that were more economically viable (greenfield sites) to secure the regeneration of problematic sites. This is understood as cross-subsidising their assets. Bensham and Saltwell in particular was 'a test case for us in terms of housing market' (Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, January 2015), understood to be a challenging site.

In entering this partnership, Gateshead Council are leveraging their assets (land) in order to enter and shape the housing market. Importantly, this is not directly disposing of their assets or services to private developers or the market alone as has been the case in previous privatisation or partnership schemes such as Private Finance Initiatives (see Raco, 2013a). Instead, the Council is building on its established marketized understanding of housing, and hegemonic view of the housing market to become actors themselves within the housing market, as Healey (1998) suggested planners in particular have the agency to do.

There was a bit of a frustration with the standard stock that was being built by massive house builders and when we disposed of a site in a traditional way, just sold the land or by development agreement, we didn't feel we had the degree of control necessary to change the product they deliver. So you rely on your planning function and rely on what you have agreed on day one, but I think part of it was actually being there, in this board, to shape the design process and build large units in a slightly different way.

(Respondent in Legal, Democratic and Property Service, March 2016)

In this way, the Council understand themselves to be 'proactive' and 'innovative', moving the market from supply-led to demand-led; and shaping the demand side of the market in providing larger houses built to a better standard than the current private market is providing. There is an understanding that the private market is problematic, but that in harnessing a private developer, the local state can both shape and improve the market. The partnership therefore offers an opportunity for the local state to influence design and have control over development in a new way; above and beyond the traditional control of statutory

functions such as planning⁴⁰. The partnership therefore becomes a competitor, with a large and secure land portfolio:

We literally would have had to give some of these sites away, this way we chucked nineteen sites together and we get all those sort of design criteria way beyond, which kind of then pushes other schemes up to standard, because they kind of go: look we are doing that there, that is your competition, so your Persimmon and your Bellway and everyone else thinks oh God, I am going to have to up my game a bit because if I want to flog my houses I will have to raise the bar. So that was the aim, it was never meant to be about finance, it was about quality, just to show North East house builders there can be a different product, you can design in quality.

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, February 2014)

The aspiration that the Council want to *raise the bar* in house building across the borough firmly establishes them as seeking to lead the house building market. Not only has the existing housing market been framed as failed, here we can see the house building market is also understood to be inadequate. The Council, drawing upon its assets and power (see Scott, 1998) is not only entering the market, but seeking to actively shape and lead it through competition providing housing 'above and beyond what the market would have provided' (Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, January 2016). This supports Leitner's (1990) contention that the local state has learned to imitate the outlook and financial practices of the private sector, in this case housing builders. Although the respondent claims, as many others did, that the partnership is not about finance (understood in this case to mean profits), the following section considers whether or not the partnership is realising its potential to be understood as a vehicle for financialization. It does this though considering the techniques of financialization.

⁴⁰ The partnership sets the amount of affordable housing provided, which in the first phases of development has just exceeded the required amount set in the local plan. It should be noted that the future of the amount of affordable housing in later phases is unclear since the nature of the housing associations role within the partnership is uncertain and it was implied that higher than required amounts of affordable housing may not be achieved in the future due to cost implications. It should also be noted that the partnership has also influence the design of the building to achieve higher than average space standards, and higher than required levels under the code for sustainable homes.

5.4.3 New Contractualism: a vehicle for financialization?

Set within new public management debates, privatisation and public-private-partnerships was the technique of new contractualism that we saw earlier in this chapter in section 5.2 - governing through contracted partnerships which is understood to move towards privatisation; replacing public agency with private control (Jayasuriya, 2002). Raco (2013a) outlines the way in which PFI in particular employs long-term contracts alongside complicated financing structures. It is the chains of contract and the techniques of management and delivery that contracts produce that are of particular importance to Jayasuriya (2002) in highlighting agency. The following section considers the use of contracts in the GPR, alongside the associated financial structures, risk and rewards in order to argue that the partnership is a vehicle for financialization.

The partnership is bound by a series of legal agreements as well as a business plan for the partnership and separate business plans for each phase of development. These documents are collectively referred to as 'a contract', although a single contract for the entire partnership does not exist. It is important to highlight upfront that it has not been possible to access any of these documents, as they were repeatedly said to be 'commercially sensitive', and not therefore in the public domain (even in a redacted form for the purposes of this research), which is a methodological limitation discussed in Chapter Four. Importantly this restricts the degree to which the nature of contracts can be fully understood, a finding that is not uncommon when researching such partnerships (Raco, 2013a, b). The findings in relation to this discussion therefore rely on empirical interview material.

As we saw in Chapter Two, the GRP is a separate Limited Liability Partnership which consists of Evolution Gateshead (Galliford Try and Home Group) and Gateshead Council. A professional member in the Economic and Housing Growth service manages Gateshead Council's representation within the partnership. The partnership itself is accountable to the GRP board, with a total of eight members who represent the partners. The decision making process and political accountability and professional and social relations within this will be discussed

in more detail in Chapter Six. In terms of the details of the 'contract', a respondent from the Legal, Democratic and Property Service (January, 2016) confirmed that there are seven legal agreements that constitute the partnership:

1. Members agreement: sets out the partnership constitution between Gateshead Council and Evolution Gateshead: 'how you will run your business and when to meet and make decisions and so on'.
2. Land sale agreement between the GRP and Gateshead Council; 'the mechanism for putting in new sites and the conditions around that, so it's effectively a conditional contract for the sale of land. So if you get planning [permission], if you jointly agree a scheme, agree a value for the site, that triggers the site going in.'
3. Construction Framework: 'by which Galliford Try are appointed as contractors to build the houses as and when the scheme is approved'.
4. Property and Development management agreement 'which is effectively the way in which [the GRP] team provide services to the partnership'.
5. Loan Agreement 'which is Evolution Gateshead providing development finance to the partnership'.
6. Associated loan documents.
7. Security documentation associated with the loan.

These agreements are therefore the framework that establishes the terms of the partnership; partner obligations, decision making and managerial processes the sale of public land to the partnership, and the mechanisms through which the partnership is financed (which makes up three of the seven documents). The partnership business plan is said to detail the 'ethos of the partnership' (Respondent in Legal, Democratic and Property Service, January 2016) and 'broad outlines for all the sites, and KPI's and things like that' (Respondent in GRP, January 2016). The site-specific business plans contain details relevant to those sites such as the financing mechanism and obligations, for example the amount of affordable housing being provided etc. What will be discussed in the following section is the presence of finance within the partnership and associated risks and rewards.

The partnership is financed by Evolution Gateshead; through private finance from Galliford Try, and from Homes and Communities Association funding via Home Group (prior to its withdrawal). The GRP then borrows from Evolution Gateshead to finance the cost of development through 'a rolling loan facility that will allow it to do so' (Respondent in Legal, Democratic and Property Service, January 2016). The partnership is therefore self-financing between separate partner bodies, borrowing from itself in different forms to achieve a more attractive commercial return than borrowing from central government, or 'the classic grant that the north east relied on traditionally to get housing sites away...that doesn't work for our sites' (Respondent in GRP, January 2016). There is a definite shift away from the dependency of central state towards a commercialised understanding of financing development. The local state is therefore actively harnessing private finance through the partnership in order to carry out development, being both a driver of and dependant on the financial markets and actors. It is in this way that the partnership can be interpreted as financializing housing both 'of and *through* the state' (Aalbers, 2016:4), albeit in different and less overt financial mechanisms than found by Peck and Whiteside (2015), Weber (2010) or Beswick and Penny (2017).

Following Christophers' (2015b) call to be explicit in identifying the specific nature of types of financialization, here housing is being increasingly treated as a purely financial asset, and the local state actively harnessing private finance to reconstruct the existing housing market - or perhaps arguably, fostering a new market, following the near-deconstruction of the old one - but the housing market nonetheless, while continuing to retain control of this process along the way. I see this as the fragmentation of the local housing market, and introduction of new opportunities for private finance - of developers and subsequent individual mortgage holders. This form of financialization differs from commodification in that it is not just the production of the housing that matters, but increasing use of private finance through the local state which understands both the housing market and individual (potential) home owners to be assets and sources of equity insertion and extraction. Certain actors within the local

state have been explicit in their understanding of future home owners as an economic asset. Finance markets more widely have become reliant on house building and simultaneously, the home has become increasingly reliant on finance (Aalbers, 2008). It should be noted that the exact mechanisms to achieve this remain unclear, and it is difficult to identify the exact nature (or indeed presence) of financialization. The following section considers the risks and rewards of this form of partnership, understood as features of financialization (Weber, 2010).

5.4.4 Features of Financialization: Risk and Reward

The financial risks of the development would mainly lie with Evolution Gateshead, obviously the risk to us is that the site is not viable and they pull out, then we lose the land receipt.

(Respondent in GRP, January 2016)

Whilst the financial risks are understood to largely lie with Evolution Gateshead, council respondents are equally responsible for managing a risk register, which details approximately 30 risks associated with the partnership. Again this risk register was not accessible, due to its commercial sensitivity. Attaining information on risks was difficult, with respondents relying on familiar techniques of asking me to confirm exactly what it was that I was looking for, which is difficult to articulate without knowing the scope and nature of risks. However, the main financial risk to the Council, as shown above, was said to be losing the agreed value for the land, should the partners withdraw. The GRP being set up as a limited liability company means that the partners are not necessarily liable for each other's actions, but the exact details of the partnership risks are simply unknown due to the lack of transparency.

Other concerns which were raised by officers not directly involved in the partnership, or local residents or politicians can be understood as perceived (non-financial) risks. For example, a perceived risk that the development will fall back into the hands of private landlords was raised, which as we saw earlier was a perceived cause of housing market failure under HMR. Although this is not

something that the local authority can control in the long term, it is being managed in the short term through the partnership's sales teams by refusing to sell multiple houses to a single buyer, or not accepting buy-to let mortgages. Although there is nothing to stop someone later converting to a buy-to-let mortgage or selling on to a private landlord, this is an attempt at state regulation in this new mode of governing housing.

Another perceived risk was that the size and scale of the partnership could lead to the dominance of a certain house type:

'I remember saying well if we do this, if we go into partnership with a developer, I don't – what we really can't have if we go into- with one developer of nineteen sites across the borough, I feel quite passionately about design and architecture, is a Gateshead House.'

(Leader of the Council, September 2015)

This concern is limited here to design and architecture⁴¹; the apprehension that in becoming a housing developer, the Council will fall prey to their own concerns with volume house builders, and a standard house type will be mass produced. However, the perceived risk of the partnership producing a dominant house type within the house building market across the market can be extended more broadly. There is arguably a risk that the partnership could dominate the local house building market outright as they develop a large portfolio of publicly owned land over a long term period. Whilst there is not an infinite amount of land in the Council's ownership, there is a sufficient amount to position themselves as strong competitors in the house building market. Whilst the GRP argue that a higher quality house (in terms of design, space standards and environmental sustainability) that is more affordable is being provided through the partnership, these factors are not guaranteed in the future, but instead they are negotiable within the partnership. There are perhaps further risks to the public and democracy in the local state becoming a private housing developer,

⁴¹ The concern over the production of a standard house type being built across the borough has been addressed by the partnership through the use of different architects for different phases of development.

raising questions of responsibility, accountability and transparency, which will be discussed more fully in Chapters Six and Seven.

In terms of rewards, as far as the council is concerned, the partnership enables it to develop more difficult HMR and other publically owned sites, alongside some more commercially attractive greenfield sites, making their land contribution financially viable. There is of course the opportunity for the council to make profits from the development of land, although this was repeatedly stated by respondents as to not to be the driving force of the partnership:

‘I think it’s important to stress that is not like a normal development where you are expecting the returns to the Council, it’s more about the regeneration of the area, that’s the importance to them’

(Respondent in GRP, January 2016)

Nonetheless there is the opportunity for the Council to generate profits and the mechanisms for realising this are set out in the relevant legal agreements. A respondent from Legal, Democratic and Property Services explained that profits made from the sale of houses are to be shared equally between Evolution Gateshead and Gateshead Council, after paying off suppliers, contractors and debts. Profits will be released when the profit margin of 14.5% is reached, and only at the end of developing a bundle of sites. Any ‘super profits’ beyond this are distributed on the same basis. Importantly, this is a long term partnership, which is not going to realise quick financial returns:

‘You have to understand this is a continual process. The nineteen sites we have identified, there are contracts to build out five of them. We don’t want to flood the market by doing all nineteen at once, we are working through developing the other sites.’

(Respondent in GRP, January 2016)

Not only is the local state’s active role in shaping the housing market realised here, but we can also see that the local state is understanding, responding and shaping the local housing market, and navigating its way in a period of slow growth, which as we saw earlier is a condition under which financialization operates (Peck and Whiteside, 2015). In building on a marketized understanding

of housing and guiding private finance through the market further to austerity, the local state can be understood to be performing a particular form of financialization. It is actively reconstructing the housing market through a complex (and opaque) process of self-financing (through harnessing private finance). This moves the local state towards the latter stages of entrepreneurialism as Peck and Whiteside (2015) suggest; balancing initiative and risks through self-financing mechanisms in order to gain rewards. How such rewards are defined and understood is considered in the following section.

5.4.5 Deepening Entrepreneurialism: Future Finance Generator?

The GRP are in the early stages of developing the first phase of housing in Bensham in Saltwell, with many plots sold, but construction still underway. Profits from the partnership have not therefore been realised as yet, and at the time of the research, respondents were uncertain about the future of profits, and unwilling to speculate as to what they might be. In terms of understanding how profits might be used by Gateshead Council, a respondent in the GRP stated that profits would be put back into the partnership:

‘I think going forward [profits] will probably be recycled to go into developing some of the poorer sites which have got a hugely negative land value, if there is any profits, then the JV (Joint Venture) would decide right well we need to bring this site forward, we have got an obligation to invest in it.’

(Respondent in the GRP, January 2016)

However, a subsequent interview with a respondent from the Legal, Democratic and Property Service confirmed that that Gateshead Council are only obliged to contribute land to the partnership, and there is not a clear plan for the use of any profits received:

‘If you achieve over and above that [profit margin], you look to reinvest where you can, but ultimately that’s by agreement so there isn’t an obligation to recycle money between bundles, each bundle stands alone separately....it would just be a decision for the Council as to how to invest that in the future, so it wouldn’t be ring fenced necessarily for housing purposes.’

(Respondent in Legal, Democratic and Property Service, March 2016)

The understanding therefore that profits will be used for future housing regeneration is an aspiration of the partnership rather than a real commitment from the Council. Whilst the underlying aim of the partnership is said to be about delivering housing regeneration, the range of sites included in the partnership moves this aim beyond regeneration in reality and into housing development more widely, with the potential to realise profits. Since the partnership arose and was shaped by conditions of central government funding cuts, there is a question around how the success of the partnership will be used within the context of austerity. This is something that was put to the same respondent as above:

‘I think what you could have anticipated in light of austerity cuts is there might be a willingness for the Council to change its view and become more of a developer, and take more of a commercial return that can be used to support other services, but we haven’t sort of felt that pressure as yet. That might be the case in the future; it looks to make money from the vehicle to use that elsewhere. It’s still the purpose of this to achieve our housing regeneration, so bring forward the sites that needed a bit of intervention and create that better stock. And that hasn’t changed at the minute. But who knows really.’

(Respondent in Legal, Democratic and property Service, March 2016)

Despite the lack of transparency in the partnership allowing for a full picture of its ethos and drivers, it is revealed here that the future use and realisation of the partnership is simply unknown. Although it has grown out of a perceived need to complete housing regeneration, in order to make its partner role economically viable, the local authority have stretched this regeneration aspiration, to become a housing developer partner. It is acknowledged here that there is the *potential* for the partnership to pursue increasingly commercial returns, and to succumb to economic pressure in order to finance other services. It is clear that austerity is a potential driver in this changing mode of governing housing locally, not as a definite shift, but a creeping change in attitude and realisation of potential outcomes. This deepening of the established marketized and entrepreneurial philosophy towards housing is understood to be moving slowly beyond entrepreneurialism. As MacLeod (2011:2646) highlighted through the example of Business Improvement Districts, such organisations are becoming the ‘new

primary definers' of governance, rather than entrepreneurs. Importantly financialization is understood here to be a vehicle through which such changes in governance are moving beyond entrepreneurialism, as Peck (2017a:22) highlights; 'the more recent manifestations of financialization are growing out of the degraded soil of late-entrepreneurialism'.

Financialization is not understood here as a new era, but the latest manifestation of a more long-term trend: a later phase of entrepreneurialism. There is an acceptance that the local state is on course for an intensification of financialization, and with that increased risk taking (Weber, 2010) under austerity. Importantly, this is a particular form of financialization, which is not as explicit as that found by Weber (2010) in Tax Increment Financing or by Beswick and Penny (2017) in their examples of a Special Purpose Vehicle in Lambeth. The GRP joint venture model is one that simultaneously retains ownership and control, but accepts new state actors into the fold in order to do this, splitting the profits and blurring the financial mechanisms through which it operates. Much like more explicit forms of what Beswick and Penny (2017) term 'financialized municipal entrepreneurialism', this form of governing is narrowing the potential for alternative imaginaries.

The partnership's focus on private house sales is shifting the local state's focus of alternative housing provision, and the conditions under which it now operates are reducing the ability to consider alternative ways of working. This is a familiar pattern across local authorities since the revenue support grant that used to make up approximately eighty per cent of Council funding, now makes up around sixteen per cent, and will disappear entirely by 2020 (Councils in Crisis, 2017). Councils are therefore increasingly having to rely on business rates and council tax incomes, and seek to become self funding in other ways, largely through property portfolios. However, there is a huge geographical disparity in how such models of self funding are unfolding across the country, with some councils receiving considerably more in business rates (Westminster City Council earning nearly £1.8billion compared to Newcastle City Council's 100million (Councils in Crisis, 2017)).

There are also significantly different approaches in various places, Sevenoaks District Council for example has become the first self-funding authority through investing millions of pounds in assets in recent years, taking control of office blocks, a supermarket, pub, petrol station etc., reaching the point where it now breaks even from the previous revenue support grant (Council in Crisis, 2017). As local authorities move increasingly towards self funding services, there are a number of questions to be raised about the associated risks of exposing services to the property market, which Weber (2010) warns could compromise such services. However in Gateshead the local state is selling off its assets to generate income and achieve regeneration, which is not a sustainable solution in the long run; once the houses are sold, there are no opportunities to make a return on the land assets (save for Council tax). It is important to understand the geography of such changes to the local state as they unfold differently and unevenly.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has charted a long journey of local housing regeneration, which began with the active deconstruction of the housing market under HMR, through the use of experts and evidence. It is acknowledged that there are methodological limitations which have restricted the extent to which the relations between consultants and the local authority can be considered (how they are commissioned, managed etc.), which may have revealed the power relations and agency within co-produced knowledge and systems (Parker and Street, 2017). Also, without the transparency of being able to analyse the business plans or legal agreements, it is difficult to fully grasp the ethos and drivers of the subsequent partnership, the chain of contract, (Jayasuriya, 2002) or social relations/agency. What can be drawn from this research however is that the use of consultants evidence and expertise formed a marketized and entrepreneurial understanding of housing within the local authority, and led to a narrative of neighbourhood decline and a deconstruction of the housing market. This marketized understanding of housing was absorbed into local government and

built upon under the creation of the GRP, which is analytically considered to form part of the broader local state.

Findings of attitudes within the local state towards housing have revealed two things; firstly the housing market is understood to consist of multiple markets for different people, which extends Allen's (2008) findings of housing being viewed from a middle class position. More in line with Rex and Moore's (1967) theory of housing class, the existing housing market in Bensham and Saltwell is understood as a residual market for those in need of cheap private rents or cheap home ownership. The new housing market is an alternative to this, designed to attract the more wealthy home owning class. Secondly, whilst such a marketized understanding of housing has been established amongst many officers, this is not a unified understanding of housing, and local politicians in particular presented a contested view of the housing market. As such the local state is not a unified ensemble, and there are more complex relations at play within it. This is a theme that will be considered in the following Chapters Six and Seven, but it is worth highlighting here that such findings imply a contestation between what Bordieu (1998) would call the left and right hands of the state; the contradiction that the state is responsible for nurturing and more 'feminine' aspects such as welfare (the left hand) and also more disciplinarian, punitive and controlling 'masculine' traits (the right hand).

Under a continued period of slow growth and austerity, this marketized understanding of housing and entrepreneurial governance has built the foundations upon which the local state is reconstructing the housing market and harnessing private finance through a complex and opaque process of self-financing housing development whilst managing a suite of risks in order to pursue regeneration. It is therefore a form of financialization (Peck and Whiteside, 2015) which has the potential to intensify its commercialisation further and even fund various local state services. Importantly, financialization must not be understood in ideological or monolithic terms, but as a process that is itself rife with contradictions, which can only be understood through a closer examination of the relations within it (Christophers, 2015b). There are of course

methodological limitations when the nature of such mechanisms are deliberately opaque. However, for Madden (2017) the nature of financialization must be made visible in order to be contestable, and he argues that we need to understand financialization as a political problem, as opposed to a technical one of complexity. The extent to which the local state is being reconfigured, and a contribution towards the little known local politics of financialization (Whiteside, 2010), and its potential post-democratic modes of governing (Peck and Whitehead, 2015) will be discussed in the following Chapter Six.

We saw the immediate pressure for local authorities across the country to become self-funding, and that property is particularly being used as a vehicle to do this. However, there is a geography to this, and it is unfolding differently across the country, particularly as more affluent areas have the ability to extend their assets and returns as a consequence. In Gateshead, we are seeing the local state take a different form, and slowly relinquishing assets in order to make a more immediate return whilst achieving regeneration. Although we saw an attempt at state regulation within the sale of private housing, in reality the local state has no long term control over the market once the houses have been sold privately, other than a hope that they have influenced competitors. There are questions over the long-term sustainability of such a model of self-funding, which will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

6 The Place of Politics and The Politics of Place: A Post-Democratic Local State?

6.1 Introduction

So far we have seen a significant move away from the language of dependency in local government housing provision, towards an intensification of marketized understanding of housing through a particular type of partnership and a particular form of financialization. Building on the argument in this thesis that such changes in housing provision are helpfully conceptualised through the local state (Peck, 1995; Peck and Tickell, 2002; MacLeod, 2011), the following chapter examines the existing and emergent social relations and specifically the particularities of power relations (Allen, 2003) and politics within the local state (Leitner, 1990), drawing again on SRA to understand such changing relations. In doing so it answers RQ2: What is the place of politics and democracy in the local state's housing intervention?

It was revealed in Chapter Five that the use of 'experts' and 'evidence' was instrumental in establishing a dominant marketized understanding of housing, and yet there were also opposing and conflicted understandings found amongst local politicians (and as we will go on to see in Chapter Seven, amongst local residents too). This chapter more closely examines the relations of local politics and contestation within and beyond the emerging local state arrangement. In doing so it picks up the discussion set out in Chapter Three, to consider Cochrane's (1993) proposition that locally elected politicians are becoming one element within a fragmented local state, where decision making is being made in different forums than the traditional local government arrangement; increasingly by officials rather than councillors (Cockburn, 1977), or executives, experts, business elites and partnerships (Peck, 1995; MacLeod, 2011; Raco, 2013). It also considers the present-day relevance of Cockburn's (1977) concern with the condition of local politics in Lambeth (low membership and activism of the labour party, cliques of councillors, low turn outs etc.), described as a 'co-ordinated and closed council machinery' (Cockburn 1977:93).

The chapter begins by looking at the changing form and function of the local state; what and who it is made up of and what it does, alongside the existence of both old and new contradictions and tensions within it. It then explores the contemporary condition of local politics in this neighbourhood, through an account of local struggles over legitimisation and representation within this emerging local state arrangement. Although not democratically elected, we will go on to see how the partnership's inclusion in the local state is legitimised in different ways and is re-orientating the approach of both the democratic and institutional roles within governing. Such changing relations within the local state thereby reveal increasing moves towards what Colin Crouch (2004) understands as a post-democratic condition.

6.2 Redrafting the Local State: Wearing Different Hats

Applying a more fluid and relational understanding of the local state, as set out in Chapter Three, this section further explores the deepening of local state agency within the housing market that we saw in Chapter Five, and the changes that the Gateshead Regeneration Partnership (GRP) and a more marketized mode of housing delivery bring to the local state. It will do this through considering the way in which the local state is currently understanding and negotiating its often competing functions such as economic development, housing delivery, social services, historic and environmental conservation, public protection and representation. By specifically considering housing regeneration and planning, which has traditionally been tasked with balancing these various functions within the institutional structure of local government, the relations between new and existing local state actors reveals a specific and current shift in understandings of the local states form and function. This is important for this chapter as it reveals not only what constitutes the contemporary local state, but also the way in which decision making is being carried out through the relations within the local state.

For example, an interview with GRP partners reveals how the functional identity and regulatory responsibility within the local state is currently being understood

in very separate ways. Here regeneration is understood as ‘delivering economic and housing growth’ and planning as having an ‘independent role which I don’t represent...so there is a very clear separation between the LPA [Local Planning Authority] and what we do.’ (Respondent in GRP, January 2016). Here the GRP are seeking to distinguish themselves as a housing developer, with Gateshead Council as partner, acting in its economic development and housing growth function. The claim that this partnership role does not *represent* the planning function appears to be being made in order to reinforce the *independent* statutory planning function of the LPA. By conceptually separating the economic development and planning functions in this way, the GRP are seeking to legitimise both the GRP in terms of justifying and validating their housing-based economic role and the LPA by sustaining its independent and statutory function: ‘So Gateshead are obviously an investor, they are part of the GRP, but they also have their local authority planning hat on, as well’ (Respondent in GRP, January 2016). There is therefore an awareness of the complexity of roles and responsibilities within the local state.

This is not necessarily to be understood as part of a trend that shifts urban regeneration and economic development away from local government towards business interest through a process of ‘contracting out’ (see Raco, 2013a, Peck, 1995; Cochrane, 1989). Instead the partnership is actively being *contracted in* to what is understood here as the local state; harnessing private developers (and finance) that then become enshrined within local economic development and decision-making. Similar to the discussion in Chapter Five, that positions the local state as moving beyond entrepreneurialism (Peck, 2017a, b; MacLeod, 2011), the established logic of ‘privatism’, which places confidence in the private sector to provide prosperity, is being dislocated in place of the local state partnership becoming a dominant force in governing. Importantly however, there is a discursive distinction and fragmentation of actors and relations within the local state, and drawing on the principles of SRA (Jessop, 2016), we can reveal how it is not therefore a unified object or set of relations.

However, the dominant narrative of marketization within the local state, that we saw was established in Chapter Five, is not only leading to an intensification of housing-led economic development (beyond regeneration), it is reshaping the local state's function under new (private) forms of housing provision, as well as its form through conceptually separating specific functions and how they relate to each other.

The relations of different functions was also highlighted by a respondent from the Development and Public Protection Service through their description of the Council representative's in the GRP role as:

‘a sort of go between...[who] has a bit more of a commercial hat on I suppose, the sort of purist, rather than from the planning side of things, he does have an eye on the marketability of things.’

(Respondent in Development and Public Protection, January 2015)

The partnership is thus re-orientating the local state structure and relations, providing space for increasingly commercial and marketized understandings of housing, alongside its statutory planning function. The partnership can therefore be understood to be intensifying the inherent contradiction within the state (at various levels); that it is simultaneously responsible for economic growth alongside regulatory and social responsibilities, as well maintaining consent and legitimacy (Poulantzas, 1978; Offe, 1996) as we will go on to see. However, there appears to be a period of adjustment in who is representing who (or what) within this local state re-orientation, and a strive to clarify which function people are responsible for in this new mode of working; which ‘hat’ they are now wearing.

However, whilst the LPA do have a clear role (in which they are bound to make independent decisions on all development within their jurisdiction), the planning function is not entirely separate from the GRP. Although a respondent in the GRP sets out that the partnership ‘still have to go through the same process as any other developer’ and they are ‘not treated any differently’ because the local authority are a partner, this is not entirely the case. It was suggested by a

respondent in the Development and Public Protection Service that a 'proportionate and flexible' approach is taken to the GRP planning applications; not a different set of rules, but a more flexible approach to the same rules that other developers might not be afforded. Despite the same respondents earlier understanding of the GRP being more commercial and separate to (but related to; 'a go-between') the planning function, they also saw themselves as being part of the partnership through their professional involvement in it; they were 'signed up' to it and 'moving in the same direction'. The boundaries of the independent function of the planning department are therefore understood here as flexing, as shared goals for regeneration by the GRP and the planning function are pursued within the local state.

Despite the planning functions perceived and practical inclusion within the partnership, there was evidence that this shared vision is emergent and uncertain, and not without tension, as the below extract indicates:

'The original aspirations for the JV [Joint Venture] were about improving the quality and getting something better than the norm and that was certainly the aspiration at the outset. It was really depressing in meetings with the agent we had for Bensham and Saltwell and he was saying things, [like] well it's not bad enough to refuse is it, and that is so far off the attitude you should be having, you know there is a concern you shouldn't be putting that to us, and if you were signed up as you should be for this whole aspiration of improving development, and the partnership working and so on, then how could those words leave your mouth?...and we all found that very vexing, that there was, despite this partnership, and we are all moving in the same direction, there were very traditional roles I think, and we retreated a bit to the, let's get the scale ruler out on the plan kind of thing.'

(Respondent in Development and Public Protection, January 2015)

When put under pressure and faced with development challenges, both the GRP (through their agent) and the LPA can be seen here to retreat to their traditional roles of private developer versus local government planner, rather than a partnership. The suggestion of *retreating* to a *traditional role* highlights an understanding of planning as being defensive; old fashioned, backwards or bureaucratic, when conversely the partnership is challenging planning to be

more proactive and modern. This retreating could be a result of a lack of trust of the partnership (or a specific person within it), or perhaps speaks more widely to an inherent uncertainty within certain functions that the changing role and expectation of the partnership brings to the local state; raising the longstanding balancing act that planning as a function is faced with, and/or the inherent contradiction within the local state more widely. It is important to return to the fractured relations and disputed understandings of the housing market within the local state, so whilst there is a dominant narrative of marketized understandings of housing within the local state and the state itself is central to this form of governance, there is a distinction to be drawn between the state logic and institutional configuration; both being emergent and the latter being more uncertain.

Maintaining legitimacy of the planning function as the local state becomes a housing developer was also a concern, since the agent of the GRP were said to view the partnership as 'a bit of a shoe in for getting planning permission when in reality there as an awful lot of work still to do' (Respondent in Development and Public Protection, January 2015). Interestingly, the GRP are moving away from using an external planning agent, and have recently appointed someone to work directly within the partnership as an agent in order to save money, but also to have someone 'dedicated to the partnership' (Respondent in GRP, January 2016). They will perhaps smooth over the traditional and functional differences within the local government and perhaps work towards maintaining a shared vision for the local state. This highlights the limits of externalising functions and the need for more strategic coordination of the partnership and the local state more widely.

Such findings are indicative of what Raco et al (2016) suggest is the compartmentalising of planning and the artificial separation and division of separate actors within discussions on partnerships. There is also an assumption that such actors will work together collaboratively, within development planning, with little appreciation that such arrangements would result in private actors transforming and co-producing both policy and regulatory structures,

replicating private sector project management. Raco et al (2016) draw on Ferguson's (1994) notion of 'development machines' to frame such changes; where 'development politics in many cities had become dominated by 'anti-political machines' or hybrid public-private assemblages of national and international actors' (Raco et al, 2016:222). Understood as a self-selecting assemblage, however the emphasis is placed on the private sector leading, managing and organizing development. Conversely in this thesis it is the local state itself which is considered to be the driving force of such changes. This is perhaps a result of geographical difference across the country, Raco et al's example of South Bank in London, sees the emergence of such development machines as necessary in a competitive global city. Gateshead however, has a different set of economic circumstances and priorities, which underlines the importance of researching different locals.

In conclusion, the balancing of different functions of local government and structural tensions within the local state remains just that, but the partnership as a new state actor is intensifying an already established marketized understanding of housing-led economic development within the local state. A closer investigation of the social relations within the local state reveals on-going and new contradictions within it as the local state strives to become a housing developer it also wrestles with its statutory functions and traditional form. In conceptually separating economic development and planning, the GRP are attempting to claim both legitimacy as a state actor and neutrality as a developer. This conceptual separation is however flawed, and there exists shared visions for regeneration within the local state that are flexing the boundaries of specific local state functions as it negotiates these new relations. This is a period of transition for the local state in which actors old and new are tentatively negotiating and defining their roles, responsibilities and relations. They are establishing which 'hat' they are now wearing in this emergent marketized local state. The local state are realigning to resemble private developers, but importantly agency rests within the local state here. The remainder of the chapter will go on to consider the role of local politics in this new arrangement.

6.3 The Local Politics of Place: Party Politics and Representation

The following sections consider the condition of local politics in Bensham and Saltwell. Through considering the Labour party's presence and struggle in the neighbourhood over housing, it examines Cockburn (1977) and Miliband's (1972) account of the Labour Party as being a manipulation of local working class interests into a national interest; channelling political action into an institutional mould. It situates this within the contemporary understanding that Labour have since lost the ability to appeal to, and therefore harness, such working class interests. It specifically considers what the condition and relations of local politics mean for representation, legitimacy and democracy within and beyond the local state in Gateshead. It begins by looking at the condition of the local (and broader) Labour party.

6.3.1 Labour and the rise of post-democratic parties

Gateshead has been a Labour held council since 1919, save for a small period of a loss of control in the 1920s (Morley and Davis, 2013). There is a relatively low turn out for local elections, especially in the electoral wards for Bensham and Saltwell (See Table 2), although this is roughly inline with the national average.

Table 2: Historic Election Data

(Statistics source: Gateshead Council and Electoral Commission)

Date of Local Election	Lobley Hill & Bensham Ward		Saltwell Ward		National Average Turnout (%)
	Turnout (%)	Labour Majority No (%)	Turnout	Labour Majority No (%)	
2007	37	53	31	809	38.3
2008	36	174	29.4	908	35.5
2010	55	1,272	53.2	1,216	63.1
2011	-	1,643	-	1,415	42.7
2012	-	1,399 (74%)	-	1,127 (80.5 %)	31.5
2014	-	478 (49%) (UKIP 29%)	-	804 (62%)	36.2
2015	55	2,161 (53%) (UKIP 21%)	54	1,397 (56%)	65.2
2016	29	801 (58%) (UKIP 20%)	29	726 (57%)	-

Here we can see that voter turn out for a local election in a non-general election year averages at 36%, and follows the national trend of rising in general election years. Although the neighbourhood remains a strong Labour majority, there are two noticeable trends in recent years; firstly there has been a spike in votes for UKIP which had not stood in the area until 2014, which has reduced Labour's majority, and secondly the last year (2016) saw a considerable drop in voter turn out figures overall⁴².

There has been a growing national trend in deindustrialised areas such as Gateshead seeing a rise in support for UKIP (see Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015). This pattern can be considered to conform to a disconnection between traditional political parties and the electorate, which is central to Mouffe's (2005) post-political thesis, particularly on the blurring of left and right politics, and a lack of distinct choice, identification and passion. This is what Sylvia Walby (2015) understands as a political crisis wherein such traditional parties can no longer mobilise the electorate to vote and are increasingly discontent. Walby warns that continuing discontent and disillusionment, if not channelled through political systems, could lead to a crisis in democracy itself.

This warning is something that Crouch (2004) similarly posits in his post-democracy thesis. Here such traditional parties are understood to have grown from the rise of formal constitutional democracy, with parties to the left in particular representing working class struggles. However, Crouch argues that changes to socio-economic conditions means working class identity is increasingly fractured, and certain people are being pushed back to the margins of political importance. This means that the model of democratic parties developed through the rise of democracy are no longer relevant in times where democracy is understood to be shrinking through less political engagement and voter turn out. Crouch draws at his time of writing on the rise of Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party in Italy as a product of such democratic conditions,

⁴² Voter turn out in the 2016 EU referendum vote was high at 70.6% across Gateshead; with 57% voting to leave.

understanding the rise of a characterful entrepreneur (and network of firms) to fill the growing democratic void of traditional parties. The rise of this entrepreneurial and post-democratic party is mirrored in what we are now witnessing in Donald Trump's America, UKIP in Britain and across other far-right political parties across Europe, although this could equally be positioned as post-political or a reaction against consensus democracy of 'the establishment'. Mouffe (1993; 2005) positions the growth of extreme right political parties as a crisis of political identity that confronts liberal democracy; the void in mainstream politics is filled with other forms of identification like nationalism or ethnicity. In offering a perceived alternative to the status quo, such parties thereby offer a view of democracy (through choice), but are a shift away from democracy in its maximal sense as they are based on directing frustration and disillusionment and rely on elites manipulating popular demands 'where people have been persuaded to vote by top-down publicity campaigns' (Crouch, 2004:20). They are in this sense post-democratic in that they have features of pre-democratic times, but retain elements of narrowly perceived democracy.

Importantly such conditions are grown from an everyday apathy to political parties, low expectations of politicians and an atmosphere of cynicism. Understanding the relations of local political engagement under such global political trends is therefore important to consider. This is something that John Tomaney (2016, no page) considers in the North East where the long held Labour party are losing the power that they maintained for so long meaning 'UKIP is best placed in the North East to feed off working class anger even if it does not have a credible policy for regional development'. The background political shifts are important to consider in this chapter as it contextualises what we will go on to see is a depoliticizing local state, which is fragmented and increasingly marginalizing certain publics (discussed further in Chapter Seven). The following section goes on to examine the importance of local political action and relations in decision making.

6.3.2 The Leaders Political Journey: Relations constituting the local state

Much like Cockburn's description of the political climate in Islington in 1977, with a strong Labour held Council, but low Labour Party membership or activism and low voter turn outs, Bensham and Saltwell also have long serving Labour councillors, many of whom are tied by friendship links and/or have a history of family members also serving as Labour councillors. The ward councillors with whom time was spent in this research are very active in the neighbourhood and have a strong presence on boards of local schools, charities and community organisations. Spending a significant amount of time with some local councillors revealed the way in which they deal actively and considerately for individual constituents concerns and situations. They feel a strong sense of pride and protection over the neighbourhood, and hold what can be described as 'old Labour' values on many issues, particularly housing as we saw earlier in Chapter Five. However, such strong local networks were described to me by one councillor as an 'inner circle', which resonates with Cockburn's (1977:93) proposition that the local state acts as a 'co-ordinated and closed council machinery'. The following sections consider the way in which local councillors may ascribe to such co-ordinated and closed political conditions, channelling local politics into an institutional mould (Miliband, 1972). It begins by looking at the political journey of a local councillor for Saltwell who became involved in local politics as an activist in housing, and then went on to become the leader of the Council, in position for fourteen years at the time of the research, but who has since stepped down.

The Leader of Gateshead Council (at the time of this research) became a councillor of Saltwell in 1986. He had been a long serving member of the labour party before this, and both his parents had been councillors in Gateshead. As a local resident in Saltwell, he became involved in local politics as an activist campaigning against the Council and their neglect of the older Victorian terraced housing in the area. This neglect arose from historic plans to demolish terrace houses in the neighbourhood in order to construct a motorway, which by the 1980s had not come to fruition. Certain streets of houses, as a result of Council

plans, had not been eligible for a series of grants to improve older terraced housing (which we saw in Chapter Two). One such home was a Tyneside flat that the Leader then lived in. Accusing the Council at the time of having 'inadvertently blighted the area', he became active in pushing for improved housing conditions and the protection of older terrace housing in Saltwell, setting up an organisation called Save The Avenues Campaign (STAC).

Despite the Council's political opposition to STAC as an organisation, activists 'managed to persuade' local politicians and the outcome was one of the first public private partnerships, The Avenues Agency, which consisted of Gateshead Council, Government Department of Environment, Northern Rock and North Housing (now Home Group). The Avenues Agency sought to improve older terraced housing across the neighbourhood through a process called 'enveloping'; completely renovating a small group of housing at a time; roofs, windows, doors etc., starting at the north of the neighbourhood. However, the funding was withdrawn half way though by the Conservative government at the time, leaving many houses to the south with no improvements. 'I was extremely annoyed and upset about it as a ward councillor and we have been working ever since to get that area regenerated' (Leader of the Council, September 2015).

In his later capacity as deputy leader of the Council, the leader describes becoming aware of the HMR scheme 'almost too late'⁴³. Gateshead were not considered eligible to apply because 'the time was nearly passed and we weren't big enough' as a local authority. He describes that the minister for housing at the time was coming up to look at the Baltic art gallery, and since he had met him before and being a labour authority, he agreed to see the then deputy leader. Together with officers presentations and site visits, the leader managed to persuade the minister that despite not fitting the criteria in terms of time or scale at that point, the borough was in need of regeneration funding. This is an

⁴³ Importantly it is unclear how the leader became aware of HMR in the first place, but it is more than likely through officers within the Council. It is understanding the detail of such relations which is important to revealing the power and agency within the local state. In this case the methodological limitation of researching a past event prevented revealing such an understanding.

example of political and resource opportunism, a move to maximise central state support (in direct opposition to the situation the Council faces currently). The minister is then described as having ‘persuaded whoever he needed to, so that we could do it’; Gateshead persuading central government of its ability to work collaboratively with Newcastle City Council to secure regeneration. Here we can see the relationality of politics in action; the local politicians drawing upon connections and party political affinities to influence and shape central government decision-making and allocations.

Thinking back to earlier debates on central-local relations of governing, this suggests that key actors within local government have a degree of agency and autonomy to shape such central-local relations, albeit confined ultimately to central government’s procedures, as indicated above in the decision by the Conservative government to suddenly withdraw funding. Importantly it was the actors within the local state, and relations within and beyond it that shaped the decision to undertake such a significant regeneration programme. This is not necessarily meta-governance (Jessop, 2003) at play (where systems guide and co-ordinate actors orientations and rules of conduct), but more subtle and informal relations of personal-political networks that directed decision-making and influenced power. This is a significant contribution to understanding the conceptions of a relational local state, made up of actors within it and relations between (and beyond) it.

In Bensham and Saltwell, the houses to the south of the neighbourhood, which were not renovated in time under the Avenues Agency in the 1980s, formed the majority of the streets that were demolished under HMR. The leader describes people in these streets as having been ‘let down’ in the past and ‘I needed to do something about it, and the housing - it seemed like the Housing Market Pathfinder system would enable it’. When asked about knowing if it would involve demolition he replied:

‘No, not the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder status. That really just about- I wasn’t in that sense expert, I didn’t, I never felt they needed demolition in the area...it was always a bit of a problem, the area we are

talking about at the railway lines, but in the early days then it was we just needed some funding, some resource to tackle the problems of older area housing, and after quite a few iterations of pathfinder itself and other sort of regeneration policies and aspirations, it then became clear that people wanted not just the older Tyneside Flats that they lived in...the work that we are doing now, it just became clear that there needs to be a mix of a better offer, not just maintaining, repairing area of older housing...and I am really proud of that, and all the consultations we did, that's what people wanted as well.'

(Leader of the Council, September 2015)

Having built a political career out of protecting older housing in the neighbourhood and then as an elected councillor and deputy leader of the Council, actively using his political influence to persuade central government to secure HMR funding for the area, it is interesting that the Leader then retreats from being 'an expert' on housing in the area and takes his lead from a series of regeneration policies and aspirations built on 'evidence' and 'experts', as we saw in Chapter Five. The degree to which 'people wanted' demolition and the use of consultation will be considered further in Chapter Seven. The leader can be understood here to chase central government funding for housing, but once achieved, he surrenders his political power and influence over to officers and experts within the local state. The narrative of decline, of needing a mix of housing, a better offer for local people and of demolition being what local people wanted is then reproduced here by the Leader. This resonates with Cockburn's (1977) finding that local political parties channel political action into an institutional mould; 'we should not therefore be surprised, then, when a Labour group on a local council espouse the principles of corporate planning and urban management, as they did in Lambeth. We should be surprised if they did not' (Cockburn, 1977a:49).

The political journey of the leader of the Council does not directly support Miliband (1972) and Cockburn's (1977) suggestions that political beliefs have been modified in order to maintain power, but it does suggest that political power, or motivational agendas (in this case housing regeneration) once achieved is followed by a surrendering of power or agency to officers and consultants as 'experts'. This not only supports Cochrane's (1993) call that councillors need to be more, not less political in their politicking, in order to

maintain democratic legitimacy, but it is symptomatic of Crouch's (2004) post-democratic condition; once a struggle to achieve a political voice is overcome, understandings of democracy and representation are diluted and narrowed. When the fight is perceived to have been won and political positions within the local state structure are established, there is a subsequent de-politicization, as real power is slowly and subtly dispersed to other actors, leaving a façade of political power. This raises the question of whether or not the public are any longer represented by such a mature structure of local power, which the following sections considers more closely.

6.3.3 'Proper' Politics and The Political

Questions of political power and representation are often revealed in the relations and outcomes of contestation, of moments of 'proper' politics, through political action (Zizek, 1999; Swynedouw, 2010). The following section therefore offers the example of local opposition to HMR to reveal the way in which the local structure of political power relates to resident opposition of a local state strategy.

Shortly after the announcement of Bensham and Saltwell as a HMR regeneration area, a small group of local residents formed a residents association (RA) to oppose the demolition of housing in the neighbourhood. Leading members of the RA were also active members of the local labour party, and as we will go on to see, in many ways this was as much of a political struggle within the local labour party itself as it was a local struggle about housing. Much like some of the local councillors, key members of the RA also had family members who had been elected councillors in the past, and were known to be part of one of the political families in the area, although no longer in power. In summary, the RA were a very active organisation, campaigning locally in various mediums; petitions, a strong media presence, blogs, local posters, meetings, stalls, letters of objection etc. The RA worked to mobilise local residents to object to the demolition of housing on the grounds that it was neither necessary nor wanted in the area;

replacement housing would not be affordable, it would price local people out of the area, and demolition was environmentally unsustainable. Such objections in principle to the regeneration were overridden as they directly opposed the expert constructed evidence base that saw in Chapter Five.

However, the RA in association with national organisation SAVE Britain's Heritage were successful in halting demolition through interim injunctions following a judicial review in 2011 which ruled that demolition was unlawful on the grounds that the relevant environmental impact assessment regulations had not been adhered to. Although the relevant procedures were then carried out and demolition resumed, a legal battle opposing the development continued and culminated in 2013, when the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, again halted the demolition until it was decided whether or not to 'call in' a further (retrospective) planning application for the demolition of houses for determination. Considering the case of Bensham and Saltwell alongside the similar HMR case of the Welsh Streets in Liverpool, the Secretary of State ruled that whilst the Welsh Streets would be called in for consideration, Bensham and Saltwell would not:

'after carefully considering the facts, circumstances and representations, it was decided that the planning decision for this application is best taken at the local level by the council. This proposal does not raise concerns about heritage and design, does not give rise to national controversy and is widely supported.'

(Department of Communities and Local Government, 2013)

Therefore, although the RA were successful in slowing the process of demolition down, ultimately the legal battles led to decision making being handed back to the local council (indicative of the drive for localism at the time), now as both decision maker and developer. Raco et al (2016) point out the way local resistance to development is increasingly being made through procedural and technical challenges such as this. Often the only means through which opposition can be heard, it is both expensive and time consuming for both residents and the public purse, and in this case left the RA defeated and subject to blame for

slowing the process down from other residents, local councillors and officers. This increasing turn to towards judicial means of opposition, as opposed to having space to engage with local councillors or officers leads some to conclude planning is becoming de-politicized (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011), a point we shall return to later in this chapter.

What is of particular interest in this case is that the RA were positioned and subsequently labelled by the Council, as a small group of residents who ‘were not representative’ of the community, a number of professional respondents and local politicians said. The group felt excluded from the process by being denied as a residents association;

‘They refused to involve us as a community organisation because they didn’t respect us, they refused to acknowledge the fact we were a residents association, they said we were a political pressure group.’

(RA1, Resident Association member, March 2015)

As such, Council officers denied the RA funding that was available within HMR to support local resident groups on the grounds that they were a political organisation, only established to oppose the development. This goes some way to reveal what the Council consider to be ‘properly’ political; in opposing decision making *the political* is understood in antagonistic terms, as Mouffe (2005) and Zizek (1999) suggests. As such the Council, acting within *politics* (which Mouffe (2005:9) defines as the practices of institutions that create order) effectively closed down their inclusion within the HMR process, forcing them to pursue alternative means of resistance through judicial channels. Revealing what the local state consider to be ‘properly political’ here opens up conceptual questions about what counts as politics and/or political, which is discussed below. However, justification for returning power back to the Council on the grounds that the proposal is ‘widely supported’ is questionable. Although by this point demolition had been halted for several years, leaving the neighbourhood in

limbo⁴⁴, the extent to which the development was originally supported by local residents is considered further in Chapter Seven. More broadly, this exclusion of the RA can be understood as a removal of citizen's rights; to form an organisation and participate in their polity. This removal is indicative of a post-democratic condition (Crouch, 2004).

The strong network of local councillors discussed earlier in the chapter was also drawn upon locally to present a further barrier to the RA, as the following interview extract reveals:

The residents association were not allowed to meet on council properties. The problem is the Council is everywhere. The Councillors are on the board of everything, so we are immediately blacklisted as they said we are against the development and are evil.

(Resident Association Member RA3, March 2015)

Here we can see that not only does this resident not feel represented by their local politician, but that there is a sense their political action is being closed down, or channelled by politicians within the state structure, resonating with Cockburn's (1977a:93) 'co-ordinated and closed council machinery'. The same respondent also discussed being verbally abused at Labour Party meetings for actively resisting the regeneration. There was a divide amongst some Labour Party members, with those who were also members of the RA opposing the development, and elected officials defending it, and blaming the RA for slowing progress down.

Housing regeneration has revealed (or created) a struggle within the local labour party over representation, with a divide between activists and elected representatives. This reveals the structure of politics, where a dispute shapes the existence of two logics; through what Ranciere (1999:39) calls 'wrong'. The wrong cannot be settled or regulated because its very existence has established the two parties who are in perpetual struggle over it; one side wants one thing,

⁴⁴ Many respondents spoke about the poor living conditions of the neighbourhood at this time, where halted demolition led to vandalism, fly tipping, fires, rat infestation, flooding etc.

the other another. However the wrong can be processed through shifting its relationship between two parties, this is what Ranciere understands to be politics; the meeting place and way that two heterogeneous processes meet. One process is 'an order of bodies that define the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying' (ibid:29); what Ranciere calls 'the police'. Politics for Ranciere is the meeting place with the second process: equality, understandings of which lead to a disruption the order of governing (the police). The RA are understood to be seeking to disrupt the police order through political action, and are thereby positioned in this case outside of the local state; as opposition, as wrong. Similar to Mouffe's (2005) understanding of 'politics' as institutions that create order, Ranciere's concept of the police is also, to a degree, what is understood here as part the state (the laws and bodies that govern it).

However, that is not to say that such action would be understood as political for Ranciere (1999), since he considers nothing to be political in itself (simply because something has power relations are at play within it). For something to become political (which anything can be), 'it must give rise to a meeting of police logic and egalitarian logic that is never set up in advance' (idib:32). In other words, actions in themselves (demonstrations, strikes etc.) are not necessarily political unless they seek to reconfigure the relationships between the police and society (in egalitarian terms), political action is reserved for an activity antagonistic to the police. In contrast Mouffe's (2005) understanding of political is less prescriptive, or based on outcomes. Instead Mouffe acknowledges the positioning of the political as right/wrong, but argues that creating such a binary does not allow for channels of agonism or arguments to take place, but shifts the political into moral sphere. When such channels of agonism are not available, they will manifest in antagonistic forms, this is the political – the necessary antagonism. It is Mouffe's understanding of political that is taken up here to understand the RA as a political act.

Whilst earlier we saw space being made for confrontation and activism through the leader's own political journey (or certainly co-opted such activism into the state), we are now seeing a time where such 'proper' political action is being

increasingly narrowed (but not foreclosed, as many post-political debates suggest) or channelled into juridical and procedural routes, which are expensive and ultimately returned power back to the local state. This is symptomatic of the post-democratic condition (Crouch, 2004), where the structures of democracy still exist, but political action within it is being narrowed and suppressed. Whilst the local state was previously understood by Cockburn as a closed council machinery, here through examining the relations within it, it is understood as an ensemble of (sometimes fractured) relations and functions which is depoliticising itself and becoming increasingly post-democratic. A closer look at the struggle for representation within such changes is considered in the following section.

6.3.4 Representation in the Democratic Paradox

We have seen two similar forms of activism about strikingly similar local housing conditions; firstly the leader's political journey from the STAC organisation opposing housing blight in the 1980s, and secondly the RA opposing housing regeneration under HMR in the 2000s. Both forms of activism have been entrenched within the local labour party, however they have produced very different outcomes. The key difference here is the acceptance of STAC as a legitimate form of political action, and the subsequent inclusion of its leading organiser within the structure of local politics. Whilst this is indicative of an increasing move to a post-democratic era where the mechanisms for rejecting such antagonist forms of activism are situated within the apparent confines of the state's democratic structure, it is relatedly also a local struggle over representation. It is what Mouffe (2000:5) refers to as the 'democratic paradox'; where 'liberal democracy results from the articulation of two logics [equality and liberty] which are incompatible in the last instance and that there is no way in which they could be perfectly reconciled'. Accepting that liberty and equality can not be reconciled means that the struggle for equality is given up to the status quo, the way things are becomes naturalized and there is an unwillingness to consider alternative demands - as became the case in the political direction of the third way, which was literally an endeavour to move 'beyond left and right'

(Giddens, 1998). For Mouffe (2000) a realisation of the democratic paradox ought to accept that it is impossible to achieve perfect liberty or equality but that striving for both importantly does not eliminate either. Mouffe believes that it is possible for both to coexist in unstable forms of negotiation, which require agonism⁴⁵.

The following interview extract with the Leader on the subject of RA activism goes some way to reveal understandings of this democratic paradox:

P: I always have disagreed with them, I deliberately mentioned that I lived there in the Avenues for a long time, I have represented for a long time that whole area and I still live...so I know what people's aspirations are that live there, the kind of things that people want...I am basically saying that I absolutely challenge and always have done...they don't represent the people who are particularly organising it, the Jones family (real name not given), they live outside the area we are talking about in every case.

I: If there had been more people involved as a movement...?

P: We would have certainly listened and talked to them, and we would have met with them whenever they wanted to, and I have never shied away from meetings...we have been mainly concentrating on consultations which were very positive...and again I am not trying to say I have been one hundred per cent involved because I became Leader of the Council and I could only do so much and that is why we have other cabinet members, but I guess I am speaking as much as anything from that level as Leader of the Council, but primarily as a resident and a councillor for the area, and I think I have absolute authority and a mandate to do that. The people that I am talking about that are organising it, who I have known for a long time, they are actually members of the Labour Party, I really have always challenged them...they never were and still are not representative of the people of Saltwell and Bensham.

(Leader of the Council, September 2015)

There is a very clear struggle over representation here. Despite having earlier conceded that he is not an 'expert' on housing and let officers and consultants lead the regeneration, the Leader is quick to regain his legitimacy and a mandate as elected representative if it is threatened by opposing political action. The

⁴⁵ Mouffe (2005:13) makes a distinction between two forms of antagonism; first 'agonism' refers to a relation between adversaries rather than the second 'antagonism proper' which refers to enemies outright.

Leader draws upon his own experience as a resident and a councillor to legitimise his own opinion, and support his claims of representation, whilst attacking others. At the same time however, he also distances himself from complete involvement as his role as Leader meant he could only do so much. The Leader, as part of the council, feels limited in his action and has to accept that 'we have always got to deal with case work', the functions of the local state. In positioning the RA as enemy in antagonistic (rather than agonistic) terms, the ability to understand a symbolic common space is closed down, refusing to consider the demands of the RA or alternative opinions in order to get on with the priorities of work.

The democratic paradox is embodied within the leaders own experience and established position. This is acknowledged in him accepting that:

Maybe it is something in all of us who join Labour or a political party, you believe in activism

(Leader of the Council, September 2015)

However, it would appear that his belief in activism is confined to his own forms, since there is an unwillingness to entertain, and even a closing down of, opposing activist views of the recent regeneration. So the struggle to achieve a political voice, or equality as Mouffe (2000) indicates, is given up to maintain the status quo, with an unwillingness to consider alternative demands. This is also indicative of Miliband (1972) and Cockburn's (1977a) proposition that politicians must modify their political beliefs in order to stay in power. Although this is not a clear political U-turn, it is a slow and uncritical acceptance of evidence, and balancing of a political position within the structure of local politics that has displaced their original belief and reduced their politicking. Having become established within local government, power has been surrendered, and realigned and is subsequently only used to defend the status quo, to legitimise power and curtail the very same political action that was once successful in establishing such power and position. There has been a shift in the mode of power; from an associational kind, which is collectively established and enabling, to a instrumental kind which is used to obtain leverage (Allen, 2003).

There is perhaps also more subtle personal relations at play within this process; the leader's own political journey, the relationship of established local political families, and personal tensions within the local party could influence the relations of local politics and political pressure. However, this would attribute more agency to individuals than perhaps an understanding of the wider democratic paradox allows.

Nevertheless, the leader's resolute understanding of local representation and the Council's understanding more widely of *the political* is both realised and contested by members of the RA. As we saw earlier in the chapter in section 6.3.1, wider concerns of the condition of local politics, and particularly of labour in the North East are also felt at this local level; 'the Labour Party is not challenged, its complicated, Labour is strong because there is no alternative' (Resident Association Member RA3, March 2015). Although there are increasingly alternatives in the rise of what can be considered a post-democratic party- UKIP- Labour remains a strong hold locally, albeit not without local concerns over the presence of *the political*:

The Council has been in power for so long that they become managers of the Council, it's not so much about politics. They don't challenge officers. When an officer came up with this recycled plan for demolition probably no-one looked. No one asked, they just went along as there was a pot of money and a rough plan. It's dangerous.

(Residents Association Member RA3, March 2015)

There is a dispute within the Labour Party locally, which has come to the fore over housing regeneration. Both sides have claimed to represent the public, and both have contested each other's level of representation, and the degree to which 'proper' politics is afforded. Whilst the question of public interests and public representation will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven, what can be drawn from this section is that political representation is in question. Political activism, once accepted within the confines of the local state system and legitimated as such has had its power curtailed or surrendered to 'experts'. The legitimisation of local politics therefore de-politicises it and as such threatens the public representation of politicians in favour of officers. This is again symptomatic of a

pre-democratic era, as we saw in Chapter Two in Gateshead, where decision-making was in the hands of elites; not necessarily class interests as Cockburn (1977a) suggests, but increasingly business and finance. It is important to note some caution here in the assumption that earlier times in history were inherently more democratic, or made space for more agonistic forms of activism. Whilst this is certainly the case in the Leader's own political journey, importantly it must not be assumed that activism was accepted more broadly in earlier times outright. Indeed, the assumption that planning for example was more democratic in the past (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012) is one that is disrupted through empirical research findings that we will go on to see in Chapter Seven. Importantly for Crouch's (2004) post-democratic condition, the legacy of the democratic party model survives, but it is post-democratic in surrendering political power to experts and access to state power returning to business and finance (as in the pre-democratic era). Indeed this resonates with Engels contention outlined in Chapter Two; that local politicians and elites prevent social reform. Whilst this local story is one of the Labour Party, what can be drawn from it for the purpose of the local state more widely is that the structures of local democracy remain in place, even though power within them is being surrendered or shifted into different modes. What is important to hold onto is that democratic power has the ability to return through such structures, as it did even momentarily (and arguably misguidedly) here in the Leaders reclaiming of legitimacy. Associational power is therefore not entirely lost within the local state, although as we will see it is being increasingly side-lined through the Gateshead Regeneration Partnership. The following section builds on the arguments raised thus far to consider the ways in which politician's support is used to legitimise the GRP.

6.4 The Place of Local Politics and Legitimacy in the GRP

We need to be building Council housing, and I don't even believe it should be social housing, I think it should be Council housing that's managed by the Council, we are good landlords, but ideologically this government particularly don't want Councils to have- they don't want us to build. But I have to say we are not exactly bathed in glory, we should have done far

more [under the previous labour government]...there was far too much concentration on helping people to buy, and now that the rental sector has taken over because people can't buy, anywhere near afford- the market is just going through the roof, and they cannot control rent.

(Ward Councillor, February 2015)

In highlighting marketized and neoliberal ideologies of successive governments approaches to housing, the local councillor also reveals the central-local struggle for autonomy and legitimacy in relation to housing provision. Local politicians resent that central governments have been ideologically opposed to Council housing and have instead intensified home ownership, with the local consequences of a lack of affordable homes and a dominant private rental sector that cannot be controlled. This concern speaks directly to wider understandings of a loss of confidence in the state's ability to provide functions like housing, and the private market is held up to be more a competent provider (Crouch 2004; Lave et al, 2010; Tewdwr-Jones, 2012). Despite maintaining a resolute belief in a strong local state provision of housing, this belief is compromised, as it is at odds with the GRP's provision of predominantly private sale housing. We saw earlier in this chapter how local political beliefs were suspended or surrendered to experts, the following sections considers the way in which such political beliefs towards housing feature in relation to the GRP.

There is a sense amongst local Councillors that there is a lack of alternative or choice for housing locally, much like we saw with local government professional's rationale for the partnership earlier in Chapter Five. Local politicians, out of a desire to improve the area, were led by the evidence of 'experts' to support HMR. The local disruption that resulted, both emotionally (through opposition and displacement) and physically (leaving the neighbourhood mid-way through demolition) left a strong desire and sense of responsibility amongst local politicians to finish the job of regeneration. The only option that was offered by professional officers was the partnership. So whilst local politicians have a desire to provide Council housing, the expert and professional views are leading the decision making and proposition of market-led solutions. Political beliefs are in some ways being suspended and personal

compromises are being made in order to lend support to the partnership development. This can be seen in the following:

I: Do you think the new homes will be affordable?

W1: We have been assured that they will be the same as a terraced property. And what I am saying to people is, again with people who have argued-

I: Are people concerned about it not being affordable?

W1: Well the people who opposed the development. I think now if you look at your expenses, it's obviously not just about your mortgage, your rent and stuff, a lot of its about your energy costs,

W2: Yes, and these-

W1: These are going to be energy efficient,

W2: Yes they are going to cut down

I: So they might be more expensive in price?

W2: Yes, but you will save on your energy bills, you know.

(Ward Councillors W1 and W2, March 2015)

This dialogue reveals that the quality of houses, and their energy efficiency is being used to justify what is an otherwise unaffordable scheme to many people. The average price of a Tyneside Flat in this area was sold at the time for £70,000, and the starting price for a property in the new development is £160, 000. In drawing on environmental justification, local politicians are performing a balancing of local state responsibilities. We have already seen that economic rather than social or environmental issues are the driving force of the development, and yet when the tipping of this balance against individual ideological beliefs on housing, local politicians seek different ways to re-balance it. In revealing that 'what I am saying to people...who have argued' the Councillor, despite their ideological opposition to increased home ownership, market driven housing policy and affordability, is actively trying to gain consensus from local residents in order to legitimise the housing development. The local politicians are therefore *de facto* supporting the partnership more widely.

Despite raising concerns that the developer partners investment is a purely economic one; 'they want to spend as little as they can...and get the houses up, sell them and that's that' (Ward Councillor, March 2015), the politicians are simultaneously trying to:

'show that as a Council we can work in partnership with the private sector, which quite frankly some of them were a bit nervous about developing because of the opposition.'

(Ward Councillor, March 2015)

There appears to be a belief amongst local politicians that contrary to their political beliefs, the local government must work like the private sector, and in partnership with them in order to deliver housing regeneration. This rationale could again be attributed to the political-economic conditions of austerity and the current central-local relations of the localism agenda. It could also be understood as conforming to the general shift away from government towards governance through partnership working. However, importantly the above interview extract also refers to the local resident opposition to HMR as deterring developers from developing the site. The act of local resident resistance and political conflict, is called upon here to further legitimise the partnership by suggesting that such an opposition had threatened the development. Blame is therefore attributed to these residents, and the solution offered by the local state is legitimised. This is evidence of Mouffe's (2005:5) contention that the political is now being played out in moralising ways; creating binaries between 'right/wrong' of 'we/they', and not accepting alternative demands in favour of maintaining the status quo.

The conflicting views of local councillors and their actions over housing resonates with Cockburn's (1977a) view that the labour party legitimises the local state and power locally and shapes political views into the state structure. It also suggests that political views are being modified in order to maintain their position in the state structure (Miliband 1972). Whilst local politicians grapple ideologically with housing delivery and its relationship with the local state,

support and ultimately legitimacy is ascribed to the partnership as part of the local state. Whilst Cochrane (1993) suggested that local governments are no longer the dominant political forces as a result of partnerships and other local government reforms, here we are seeing a restructuring of the local state itself.

Such restructuring is indicative of conflict being replaced by apolitical and pragmatic decision making and delivering outputs (Raco et al, 2016), of what Ranciere (2005: 10) would call a politics of the 'present and merely possible'. Here government and entrepreneurs have forced us to become realists confined the 'possible', defined by the few. For Ranciere, such realism is a reaction to no longer believing in the promise of the future (of utopias, as he puts it) we can only deal in the pragmatic, the possible here and now. Housing development has thus revealed the way in which the state understands and deals with 'proper politics'; it maintains Cockburn's 'co-ordinated and closed council machinery' and closing down of opposition, confining decision making to what experts have constructed as possible and practical. Prioritising housing-led economic growth constructed by consultants and experts and actively closing down public voices and is symptomatic of a return to pre-democratic times. The compromising of political beliefs but surrendering of political power within *the political* in order to pursue and legitimise development is evidence of post-democratic times (Crouch, 2004). How *local politics* (in Mouffe's 2005 terms) is understood within the structure of the emergent local state is discussed below.

6.4.1 The Democratic Burden: 'Bringing local Councillors along with us'

As we saw earlier in Chapter Five, a professional member of the regeneration team manages the local government's stake within the GRP and the partnership is accountable to the GRP board, who ultimately sign off decisions. The board is made up of eight representatives from each partner; four from the Council, two from Galliford Try and two from Home Group (collectively known as Evolution Gateshead). The Council's board members are all senior officers within the Council. There are no elected members on the board. The partnership therefore

was neither democratically elected, nor has any direct democratic representation.

Political involvement in the partnership comes through the Cabinet, which considers policy development on behalf of the Council and 'operates on the basis of collective responsibility and decision making' (Gateshead Council, 2010). The sixty six local ward councillors across the borough select ten cabinet members from amongst them, who are each responsible for a specific interest area (called a portfolio, such as housing, health and wellbeing, economy etc). The relationship between the Cabinet and the GRP is that the Cabinet is briefed on progress before all board meetings, when the selection of the latest sites to be developed are discussed (as well as briefing the relevant local ward councillors). This briefing and discussion of site phasing (the nineteen sites have already been decided strategically), according to a respondent in the GRP, ensures that the partnership 'is not purely officer driven'. It is unclear what the mechanism for any potential disagreement at this stage would be, since the strategic decisions have already been made, and are bound in a series of legal agreements. Whilst it is suggested that there is a shared standard and aim 'from both officer and political side of this' (respondent in GRP, January 2016) - a clear distinction being made here between the two *sides* - the relationship between the GRP and local politicians is perhaps more openly revealed in the following interview extract:

The Council is in the complex position of having to bring our councillors along with us, the political side of things. So it's obviously a very strong Labour authority with very strong views on affordable housing, and some members would like all new housing to be in some way social or shared, so it's one of the challenges for us beyond just this partnership, is bringing our politicians along with the changes in the Housing and Planning Bill.

(Respondent in GRP, January, 2016)

This extract is revealing in a number of ways. First of all the respondent considers that involving democratically elected members is *complex* for the Council's position within the partnership. This suggests that including democratic practices within such development and decision-making is out of the ordinary and problematic. Secondly, having to '*bring councillors along*' with such

decision making within the partnership reveals not only that democratic involvement is understood as a challenge, but that the power of such decision making ultimately lies with the partnership. This respondent positions their role within the Council as a development partner, responsible for bringing local politicians along with decisions which have ultimately already been made. The level of political representation and inclusion is not therefore at the heart of decision making in the partnership, but is more perfunctory and superficial. The removal of local politics from decision making is a continuation of the expert led approach which we saw in the Chapter Five, which relies on de-politicisation in order to get the job done that we saw earlier in this chapter (Raco et al, 2016).

Thirdly, local politicians are understood here not only as separate from the partnership, but as a burden to be dealt-with, in order to gain consensus more widely and legitimise the partnership. Importantly such moves must be understood as on-going; de-politicizing -or post-politicizing - rather than de-politicized or post-political. This is because the very presence of local councillors, albeit peripherally, and the understanding of them as a burden within the state highlights that democratic structures and politics remain in place, and have the potential to create spaces of disagreement or friction, hence being understood as a burden to be appeased. Whilst there is currently a loss of political debate or agonism within the state, the potential (and hope) to regain these remains present and is revealed through such relations.

Fourthly, the GRP Manager is showing an awareness of party politics in this extract in identifying that it is a very strong Labour authority. The suggestion that their role is to bring local Labour politicians along with central Conservative government policy changes highlights that there remains a central-local struggle over who is representing people at the local level (cf. Duncan and Goodwin, 1988). Whilst professionally officers must function inline with national policy agendas, the local political representation and debate appears to be being limited by the local government professional partners in order to function. The political involvement within the local state therefore appears to be being reduced by new forms of closed, long-term decision making and the professional coercion of

central government policies. The local state's function is thus being altered by the form of the partnership.

Whilst aware of the local Labour Party stronghold in Gateshead, the respondent in the GRP considers the political views of local councillors in Bensham and Saltwell towards housing to be unrealistic and unachievable within the national policy framework and political-economic climate. This understanding can be seen in the following interview extract:

I: So the political side of that you find challenging?

P: It will be, because like I say if we were in Cambridge or something we wouldn't, but we are in the North, with members who have a very strong opinion on affordable housing, and we have agreed to provide higher than policy levels of affordable in these sites, but whether that's actually sustainable moving forward given the changes to grants and funding, but as I said it will be debated over the coming months and we will come to an agreement for the next bundle of sites that come forward.

(Respondent in GRP, January 2016)

There is a professional tension apparent here in balancing local political views with central government policies. The respondent sets out their understanding of a geographical divide of central-local politics, and a sense that strong northern Labour authorities prohibit professional decision-making. The local political position is known, but is considered to be unrealistic, and as such is being managed by professionals who reluctantly bring local politicians along with the partnership to enable the central government narrative on housing to gain traction locally. Just as we saw local politicians surrendering their political power to experts earlier, this is the mirror image of the professional arm of the local state replacing politics with pragmatic and achievable out-puts (Raco et al 2016). It is limiting governing to Ranciere's (2005) politics of the merely present and possible.

This is not to say that local politics have been completely replaced, in fact they are said here to have influenced the levels of affordable housing, above and beyond the required local policy level. However, the future of such a small

influence is also said to be in question given the economic pressures of grant and funding reductions, particularly from the housing association partner. The central government tightening of austerity is therefore squeezing what little political influence there was in the local partnership, in an on going central-local struggle for decision-making and autonomy, and is perhaps pushing the partnership to become more market-driven and entrepreneurial in the future as we saw the potential for in Chapter Five.

Finally, whilst the GRP respondent highlights that local councillors have strong views on housing, there is no recognition that these views are a representation of many residents' views in the area. The democratic structure of representation is not considered at all by those members of the GRP who were interviewed, and it appears to have been lost amid the professionalized turn to become a housing developer. The local councillors, in fact, are increasingly viewed to represent a *challenge to the partnership* as opposed to a locally elected voice of the people, and this is a fundamental concern with how the partnership is changing the institutional sedimentation, social base, and representational regime of the local state. Whilst issues of representation and public interest will be considered in more detail in chapter seven, what can be drawn from these findings is that local state politics (again in Mouffe's (2005) terms) are increasingly taking place by both public and private professionals and marginalising democratically elected politicians in local government, as Cochrane (1993) suggests would become the case. Space for *the political* is being closed down within the structure of local state politics, creating a democratic vacuum which business looks to fill. Crouch (2004:29) conceptualises this as the rise in 'the firm as an institution', where the boundaries of public service and commercial provision become blurred. For Crouch governments try and imitate the flexibility and business acumen of the 'phantom firm' (ibid:40). Here however the local state is not imitating, but actively harnessing and insourcing partners to carry out its increasingly marketized function. Irrespective of differences in conceptualising the way in which such processes unfold and the agency within them, the result remains the same: an increasing move towards post-democratic times.

6.5 Conclusion: A Post-Democratic Local State

The multiple ways in which justification for the partnership has been given; blaming the opposition group, consensus building and perceived lack of choice under austerity, the strive to be seen as entrepreneurial under the established marketized understanding of housing and public persuasion, have all been involved in building up a political case to legitimise the partnership. The importance of these socio-political relations and actions in legitimising the partnership can be more helpfully conceptualised through the local state, in a way that governance cannot account for. So it is not just a matter of who is delivering housing (the functions of the state, or governing more widely), but the way in which housing is being delivered; the form that this takes, the politics involved in it includes both vertical forms of central-local government relations and tensions alongside more horizontal partnership working (governance), which all form part of the local state, with a growing logic. However, as we saw, that is not to say the state is unified in the way that Cockburn (1977a) would suggest, but it is emergent and in negotiation as the partnership changes the traditional local authority structures within the local state, both institutionally and politically.

An examination of the social relations within the local state revealed the way in which the GPR are balancing both existing and new relations, roles and responsibilities that continue the existing and bring new internal contradictions. With regard to the place of politics within and beyond the emerging local state, it was evident that after a struggle to maintain political legitimacy and power through activism, local political beliefs were being compromised and power was subsequently being surrendered or shifted to officers and experts, which in turn depoliticised the following period of decision making (MacLeod, 2011). Dispersing power to other state actors leaves a structure of democracy which is increasingly becoming a hollow façade. Whilst positioning local councillors as a burden can be understood as a deficit in democracy (Bylund, 2012), it equally

leaves hope that the structure of democracy remains, and the threat of local political opposition has the potential to be agonistic (Mouffe, 2000), and turn away from accepting the status quo and the politics of the merely possible (Ranciere, 2005).

We saw also the local manifestation of a growing trend which questions the representation of the mature structure of power that the Labour Party holds in deindustrialized areas (Tomaney, 2016), particularly within the local struggle for representation. Here housing regeneration has revealed (or possibly contributed to) a struggle within the local labour party, with a divide between activists and elected representatives. Through the Residents Association's encounter with the local state, the local state's own understanding of 'political' was offered; as an antagonistic opposition to the state. This revelation opens up space to consider conceptual questions about what constitutes the political. In considering both Mouffe (2005) and Ranciere's (1999) contribution to political theory, it is posited here that Mouffe's understanding of the political allows a more fluid and less prescriptive view than Ranciere's police and political. Irrespective of outcomes of political action (which Ranciere focuses on) Mouffe suggests that the importance should be on shifting the political out of the moral sphere, away from right and wrong (as we saw the RA positioned within), and space should be allowed for more agonistic (as opposed to antagonistic) forms of deliberation. It is within Mouffe's understanding of the political that the RA can be understood as political.

Whilst we saw an example through the leader's political journey of space being made for such confrontation and activism, we are now witnessing a time where such political action is narrowed and channelled into juridical and procedural routes (Raco et al, 2016) which limit their outcomes. Channelling local political action within local state politics, thereby contains and marginalises the political, retaining what Cockburn (1977a) understood as a 'co-ordinated and closed council machinery', but importantly this is not unified, and the separation of politics from 'work' within the state creates an underlying friction within it. Actors sometimes feeling trapped between their political beliefs, and a desire to

deliver regeneration (Webb, 2010). As such politics are never fully foreclosed (Ranciere, 1995; Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw, 2010; MacLeod, 2011), but are limited through actions which are themselves political, albeit less overtly. This is symptomatic of the post-democratic condition (Crouch, 2004), where the structures of democracy still exist, but political action within them is being narrowed and suppressed. Conflict is being replaced by pragmatic decision making and outputs (Raco et al, 2016), with the local state forcing us to become realists confined to politics of the 'possible', defined by the few (Ranciere, 2005), reminiscent of pre-democratic times where, as we examined in pre-Victorian Gateshead in Chapter Two, decision making was in the hands of the elites (Crouch, 2004).

Whilst Allmendinger and Haughton (2012) have described planners as being either naïve or complicit in similar forms of deceit, what has been revealed in Gateshead through considering the relations within the local state is that the picture is more complicated and subtle than this account of planners suggests. There are both professional as well as political struggles within the local state, which is itself emergent and challenging traditional functions. Whilst there is an overarching marketized understanding of housing which has been accepted by all local state actors, (albeit reluctantly by some), an understanding of the relations between such actors reveals on-going struggles and negotiations. There is not considered to be an overarching form of meta-governance at work (Jessop, 2003), which guides the rules of conduct. In fact, we saw through the Leaders political journey the way in which strategic decisions and directions are taken through much more fluid and personal relations. This moves some way to conceptually understanding the state as made up of the people, and relations within it. The following chapter considers the changing relationship of people; 'the public' and the local state.

7 The Place of 'The Public': In whose interest is the new local state?

7.1 Introduction

We have seen in previous chapters how the local state is increasingly becoming a housing developer and market actor, with decision-making being made with less democratic involvement; political power being surrendered to 'experts'. There is therefore a hollowing of democratic representation in the local state, and a narrowing (but importantly not an exclusion) of political processes as the state moves increasingly towards new forms of entrepreneurialism. This chapter seeks to examine where this leaves the public; in continuing to examine the power relations within and beyond the local state, this chapter will examine how the local state perceives and interacts with the public (Leitner, 1990) in this institutional arrangement, thereby answering research question RQ3; How does the local state perceive and interact with the public through housing? How do the public perceive the local state and feel towards such changes? It will do this through considering the notion of public interest, and how this concept is deployed locally.

The changing nature of public engagement will be considered by tracing the journey of regeneration and the various phases of engagement: participatory planning and community consultation. In examining these processes the relations between the public and the local state are examined which contextualise a very clear shift away from such forms of engagement, however problematic they were. We are now witnessing a moment where the local state has moved beyond attempts to persuade the public or construct consensus, as it increasingly becomes a post-democratic state (Crouch, 2004), moving into the realms of 'promotion'. It will finally consider the stigma attached not only to people and this place, but to all things 'public', and how this justifies the hidden nature of the new local state arrangement. How the local state acts and reveals itself to different people, understood as multiple publics (Iveson, 2007), will be closely considered.

7.2 Acting in the Public Interest

The term 'public interest' is a slippery one, and despite its continued use in public policy, it has been subject to much debate due to the lack of definitive meaning. Such debate has intensified since the establishment of the Keynesian welfare state and the 'socialisation of investment' (Keynes (2008 [1935]) where the state works to guide and balance the economy. Economists therefore understand the public interest as 'the problem of welfare economies' (Musgrave, 1962:107) where individual interests under Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' act collectively to control imperfect markets through the creation of public policy, creating and maintaining efficiency. However, this economic view of public interest is a narrow one, and other disciplines such as politics, law and sociology regard it more widely as a central philosophical concern in humanity (Colm, 1962, Griffith, 1962), which is bound up in ontological understandings of society and its relationship with the state.

Public interest is often applied specifically to express evaluations of public policy albeit in a general manner, as a framework of consideration. For Flatham (1966) this particular use of public interest works to shape (and limit) the facts and values in such a framework, and it is therefore political. Public interest therefore 'stands for a distinct dimension of political life, the attempt to evaluate and justify public policy' (Flatham, 1966:61). It is this critical understanding of public interest that leads many to discount it for concealing political interests (Friedrich, 1962). In seeking to evaluate or justify a particular policy, it is usually impossible to claim that something is or is not in the public interest unless all circumstances are examined in detail, which involves a balancing of multiple and competing factors (Flatham 1966) for which the state is responsible.

Leitner (1990) suggests there is a lack of initiative to analyse and monitor such effectiveness of local state intervention. Although she does not refer specifically to public interest, she highlights the difficulties in quantifying and analysing the intended benefits of policies. Importantly Leitner (1990) also suggests that the

definition of failure or success hinges on expert interests making such assessments, and cautions that there may also be resistance from elected officials. In keeping with Flatham's (1966) view of public interest being a political attempt to justify policy, Leitner (1990:158) goes on to suggest that larger economic developments specifically are used as evidence of the effectiveness and ability to deliver growth, and are therefore self-legitimizing in their 'symbol of public officials successfully creating growth'. Despite this symbolic or performed success Leitner suggests the distribution of benefits are often regressive rather than progressive. The public interest can often therefore be seen in more financial terms than social ones.

Giddens (2007) pushes the boundaries of earlier understandings of public interest that were based on clear distinctions between public and private. He considers that public interest should not imply that public services must be provided by the state because 'what the state does may or may not be in the public interest in a given situation' (Giddens, 2007:71) and privatisation may therefore serve public interest better if it challenges vested interests. It is amongst such 'third way' or 'radical centrism' thinking (the amalgamation of political ideologies which foregrounds practical realism) that public interest has seen a re-emergence in academia, where the balance between market, state and society is understood to be shifting in favour of the market.

So whilst society is often expressed in this balance through public interest, concepts of 'common interest' or 'common good' are generally taken to mean the existence of a majority or popular interest or value (Schubert, 1962) but are often conflated with 'public interest', which as we have seen has more political and practical implications. In this vein Schubert (1962:167) defines public interest as 'what the elite thinks is good for the masses'. This moves closer to Cockburn's (1977) understanding of the public as being institutionalised into the state through techniques of 'community development' and 'participation', with consent being achieved through cultural persuasion of these constructions. Similarly, Duncan and Goodwin (1988) build on Gramsci's state theory to argue that states actively transform social relations such as class or gender (as opposed

to only interpreting them) through individualising and absorbing them into artificial relations of equal citizens; producing collectivities such as 'national interest' or 'public' which do not exist in reality. Social relations are therefore mutated and performed in certain ways by the state; they are not fixed and require work by the state to be maintained. Likewise Iveson (2007) considers particular publics to be actively made, with multiple dimensions of 'the public', which should lead to flexible rather than fixed understandings. There is a need for sensitivity to difference, one that older norms of representative democracy overlooked but increasingly actors such as the media and governments appeal to 'new' publics at various scales; global, national and local, (Mahony et al, 2010). There is also the conflation of public as equivalent to the State (Purcell, 2016). Indeed I identify in later sections in this chapter differentiated understandings of 'public'; the 'general public' as the demos, and 'public' as the local authority. Within this there is also a fragmentation of the 'general public' in the way in which the local state understands and prioritises multiple forms of publics (plural), that are called into being, or emerge, at particular times (Iveson, 2007; Newman and Clarke, 2009). Such findings go some way to considering how publics are '*assembled*: made up from the uneasy and impermanent alignments of discourses, spaces, institutions, ideas, technologies and objects.' (Mahony et al, 2010:3).

Public interest is said to be in demise through growing privatisation and commercialisation (Martin, 1993; Peck, 1995; Raco, 2013a), as the checks and balances provided through formal mechanisms within the state become increasingly displaced through private practices such as partnerships (Healey, 2010). The rise of experts and private companies within state affairs during the late 1990s (under Blair's labour government) and onwards, has increasingly seen citizens as consumers to whom choice must be offered and services provided. Such 'progressive' thinking in government reform where the state is increasingly asked to work alongside commercial sectors (Giddens, 2007), often in partnership, sees public interest being 'subordinated to private interest' (Peck, 1995:36). This is considered to be depoliticising the state, and rendering it impotent to the future demands of people and politics (Raco, 2013a; Purcell,

2008), increasingly moving the local state away from 'the public good' (Gotham, 2001:290). Concern over the public interest has been placed recently within the post-political debate in planning. Critics such as Allmendinger and Haughton (2012) consider specific planning practices to circumvent the political and alienate the profession from the public. Importantly such debates assume that planning practices have emerged from a period where people were more represented, and are more democratic (as discussed in Chapter Six) which is a myth that this chapter further dispels.

For many, faith must be restored to the public sector because it is the role of the state and society to define, protect and promote the public interest (Martin, 1993; Healey, 2010) and not the market interest as Giddens (2007) suggests. The influence of business working within the state has led Raco (2013a) to call for a redefinition of public interest because:

'The incorporation of private actors into systems that are tasked with servicing the public interest has ramifications for broader understandings of democratic legitimacy and authenticity.'

(Raco et al, 2016: 218)

The following section of this chapter therefore considers the way in which public interest is being understood within the local state alongside its competing demands (Leitner, 1990). It does this through considering the micro-politics (Healey, 2010) and relations within the state and its engagement with the public, to consider what the lack of conceptual definition of public interest means in practice.

7.3 Weighing up Public Interest: What is seen and unseen

As we saw in Chapter Five, the series of legal documents and business plans that constitute the Gateshead Regeneration Partnership (GRP) are not publicly available, as they are considered to be commercially sensitive. Making financial information exempt from public availability or scrutiny is common practice, particularly around the disposal of public land. The local authority, as landowner,

is protected under the Local Government Act (1972) from revealing information that relates to its financial or business affairs, where it is considered that:

the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because disclosure would adversely impact the authority's ability to manage its commercial financial and business affairs.

(Gateshead Council, 2016:9)

Here we can see that public interest is being weighed between two points; a public interest in disclosing financial information and also one in not disclosing it. Importantly, there are no details as to what exactly the public interest is in either case, instead only a vague and unsubstantiated account is provided. Although Flatham (1966) suggests it is impossible to claim something is in the public interest without a detailed assessment of all circumstances, it is implied here that such a decision has been made. The withholding of financial information from the public is determined to be in the public interest by an official as Schubert (1966) suggests. The public interest is therefore being understood predominantly in financial terms here in line with Leitner's (1990) findings. The local authorities' interest as land-owner, is considered to be the public interest. The state control of land ownership is bound up in understandings of the public interest, not least in powers of compulsory purchase, which were used in the HMR process to enable local authorities to 'purchase land to carry out a function which Parliament has decided is in the public interest' (DCLG, 2006:6). Again, a clear decision has been made nationally, with little understanding as to how the decision was made, or what exactly is meant by it. This may well be understood as a deliberate conflating of the state and the public, where 'the State puts itself forward as the guardian or guarantor of the public interest' (Purcell, 2016:387) in order to alienate people from their own power, and vest it instead in the state, narrowing democracy.

Coming back to the GRP specifically, 'public interest' was not given as a reason why any information is not publicly available. Instead, it was repeatedly maintained that information was not publicly available because it was *commercially sensitive*. When asked what was commercially sensitive about the

partnership I was told by respondents in Legal, Democratic and Property Services and the GRP that:

P2: We have never really stopped and considered that. It's not something we are obliged to file publicly. I don't know whether we would honour a request [to look at it].

P1: I suppose you put yourself in Galliford Try's shoes and they would never release any of that type of information, and it is a part of their document.

I: But you can find out the nineteen sites on the website, so I am just trying to work out what exactly is commercially sensitive if it's known that Galliford Try are in the partnership, and its known what the nineteen sites are-

P2: Yeah, I suppose it's a fair question that we haven't really considered, you automatically think a company business plan, you don't disclose that. But if you are talking about aspirations for public art, well yes, is that really commercially sensitive information?

P1: For me, there are a number of financial assumptions and there is a phasing plan for the sites, and they are the two crucial ones that our partners don't want to go public because there is potential for competitors to benefit from that information.

(Respondents in Legal, Democratic and Property (P2) and GRP (P1), January 2016)

Here the local authority is not necessarily protecting the public interest (or even considering it in these terms), but protecting their commercial partners' interest, and that of the partnership more widely. It is also accepted that not all of the information is necessarily commercially sensitive (and a lack of consideration of this point), despite asking for sensitive information to be redacted, the GRP would not release any information, commercially sensitive or not. After several requests to look at the series of legal documents and business plans to no avail, I asked the above respondents whether the public interest was something that is thought about in the partnership, particularly in not making information available to the public and not consulting the public on strategic decisions (as will be considered in later section 7.5) and was told:

P1: There is that public sector, everything we do should be in the public interest shouldn't it?

I: Yeah, but are you saying it's quite intangible?

P2: I think that's exactly it, it's kind of always thought of, there is not sort of a public interest test at any point in deciding a bundle of sites, but yeah presumably you just always have an eye on what it means as senior officers and what is important to the Council at any one particular time...You couldn't write down exactly what it means at any point in time.

P1: As you said, it's important to officers, and our role is to protect the public interest and to make sure the local authority on behalf of its citizens gets the best out of this model, you know we do challenge, that we make sure that it's not our partners pushing us and driving us to accept all of the numbers that they come back with, you know we are constantly challenging and making sure that the best for the public interest, the best for the local authority the best for the treasury and the public purse is achieved at every stage, because there is that side of public interest that we are constantly wanting to get the best out of, you know on all levels of the public in all ways that you would define them, so yeah we are not giving things away without making sure there is a guaranteed return, and it might not always be financial, there might be some other way of defining what a return is.'

(Respondents in Legal, Democratic and Property (P2) and GRP (P1),
January 2016)

This conversation reveals a number of things about how the local state considers the public interest. Respondents are aware that they have a responsibility to act in the interest of the public, but they equally could not define or 'write down' exactly what this is. It is understood here as an overarching value that individuals 'keep an eye on' rather than a rigorous framework or test as Flatham (1966) suggests. Instead public interest with regard to the partnership has not been considered when making strategic decisions on whether or not to enter the partnership, or how the partnership functions, but instead the public interest becomes visible in smaller decisions in which there are more tangible outcomes on public protection.

Here the public interest is understood as 'getting the best out of this model', and protecting the local authority's role in the partnership; again public interest is understood as the local authority's interest. There is no consideration of whether

or not the partnership is in the public interest more broadly; only that the local authority are acting as 'the public' within the partnership and therefore the interest is in protecting their control and stake within it. The predominant understanding of public interest in relation to their stake in the partnership is revealed here to be an economic one; the *treasury*, the *public purse*, ensuring a *guaranteed return*. Although it was qualified that a return might not necessarily be a financial one, no other examples of return were offered. It is clear therefore that the partnership is understood as a marketized model for housing delivery, and the public interest is understood to be maximising the local authority's financial returns. Although a narrow selection of professional voices are offered here in relation to public interest, such voices are indicative of a view found across respondents, particularly as the partnership has the potential to become a future income generator as we saw in Chapter Five. So what does this mean for the State? Whilst historically balancing often conflicting demands that are placed upon it, here we appear to be seeing demand such as representation and legitimisation giving way to the demand of accumulation.

Although clearly used in economic terms, what is apparent here is that the public interest is not a zero sum, but as Healey (2010) suggests, it is fluid and porous, and what is revealing is how it is interpreted and defined. That the public interest is said to be intangible and elusive, it is equally drawn upon at specific moments, which highlights its power as a malleable and negotiable set of values, based on informal judgements being made behind the scenes (MacLeod, 2013). A closer look at the way in which the local state relates to and engages with the public is considered in the following sections.

7.4 The Marketing State: A De-democratising Journey of Public Engagement

As we have seen, the concepts of 'common interest' or 'common good' are often conflated with public interest. When looking at discourse analysis of HMR, Webb (2010:314) shows how academic advocates and pioneers of the regeneration

initiative 'understand public interest as something which is shared and see the role of their research as determining the 'best' solutions to society's common problems'. This implies that a common interest or problem was already established and was mobilised to produce an expert-led solution through intervention, and subsequently understood as being in the *public interest*, as Schubert (1962) suggested. Webb considers how different (but not opposing) strategic narratives were brought together into a vision of the future which engaged different actors with different concerns to ultimately support HMR as the 'optimum scenario' as he calls it. So multiple experiences and narratives were combined to produce a single and shared solution. Webb (2010) suggests this is a representation of complexity which is discursively constructed at a strategic level, and its translation at a local authority level is then dependant upon having an expert-led evidence base with key actors committed to the outcome. 'As long as this occurs, the HMRI can proceed on the basis that it is operating in favour of a single public interest' (Webb, 2010:324).

We saw in Chapter Five the fundamental flaws in the evidence base in Bensham and Saltwell, and how a narrative of decline was established and acted to justify the regeneration process. It was also revealed in Chapter Six, those political ideologies that opposed the hegemonic discourse ultimately surrendered their power to experts and as such further legitimised the regeneration, and closed down local opposition. Webb (2010) suggests that the use of such a marketized evidence base and displacement of opposing narratives acts as a veil of objectivity that shields inherent values and assumption from democratic scrutiny under the claim that it is acting in the interests of everyone; understood as the public interest. In this regard, the construction of public interest can be seen as political as Flatham (1966) suggests, but importantly it is not being used to evaluate policy but to drive policy as Leitner (1990) suggests; regeneration then becomes self-legitimizing in the delivery of economic gains.

HMR was driven by the 'ability to achieve a workable degree of community consent' (Cole and Nevin, 2004:33), and the resultant consensus-building from the marriage of expert evidence and political discourses was one way in which

this was achieved. Webb (2010) suggests that this may be a high price for society to pay, and the following sections of this chapter considers the way in which the public were understood and engaged with under HMR, and how this problematic relationship is becoming even more so under the current partnership arrangement.

7.4.1 Steering Participation: Consensual Persuasion Smothers the Political

Forms of community engagement through participation and collaboration in planning were popular in the 1990s and early 2000s, but have subsequently been considered to close down political debate in order to gain consensus (Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw, 2010; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012). The early stages of HMR in Gateshead were no exception to this trend. The organisation Planning Aid⁴⁶ was enlisted to structure and organise a programme of events to 'build community capacity' and to 'build trust' with the Council following historic suspicion and cynicism from the public, according to a representative who worked as a Planning Aid volunteer in Gateshead at this time. Planning Aid, in partnership with organisations such as Northern Architecture, CABE, Living Streets and Newcastle University devised a programme to raise awareness of urban design and training in neighbourhoods facing HMR as

'a practical and hands-on way to deal with residents from run down areas, making sure to package and pitch it at the right level.'

(Planning Aid Volunteer, April 2014)

The programme was phased during 2007/2008 and included drop in sessions, leaflets, and questionnaires initially which gauged resident interest and led to design workshops and bus trips to consider various examples of urban design across the region, including other HMR sites in Newcastle. Three neighbourhoods undergoing HMR in Gateshead were targeted, but interest came from one group

⁴⁶ Planning Aid offers free independent planning advice to individuals and communities. Funded in the past by the Department of Communities and Local Government, until funding was withdrawn in 2012. Planning Aid has since made many employees redundant and scaled back its services, operating largely now through on-line advice funded by the Royal Town Planning Institute.

of residents in the Felling area of Gateshead, who were educated and engaged in urban design and went on to produce an 'audit' of their area. Since HMR areas were already designated at this time and demolition areas had been identified, this exercise was intended to consider the future design of the area only:

'Residents needed to be empowered to say what they liked and disliked about their area. The best we could achieve was building up bite-sized chunks of meaningful input. Design was used as a hook – people were given confidence and fluency in the subject to be able to say...this is what we like, this is what we don't like.'

(Planning Aid Volunteer, April 2014)

The language of using urban design as a *hook* to engage residents with, in order to *deal* with them, whilst intending to empower, reveals an underlying propensity that this form of engagement can become less about empowerment, and more about achieving public 'buy in' (MacLeod, 2011; Mitchell et al, 2005). Any such *empowerment* was limited from the outset in steering participation towards the future design and drawing attention away from the process of demolition. This is a similar process that Loretta Lees (2014) highlights in her Aylesbury case study, where she considers participation to be institutionalised, acting as a masking and steering technology. Here the process was led by design experts seeking to legitimise regeneration by building consensus around 'good' and 'bad' urban design; creating a knowledge which becomes a tool of what Paddison (2009) calls 'consensual persuasion', gaining support from residents by their inclusion, and thereby legitimising state action (Paddison, 2009; MacLeod, 2011). Importantly the technique to achieve this is to narrow the choice that is offered in the first place; in focusing on the outcomes of design, questions such as 'should there be large scale regeneration?' were not asked (see Mitchell et al, 2015).

The scheme was said to be a success in that it did engage one particular, very small, group of residents (approximately six) and funding for the community engagement project was extended to support the group. The scheme went on to win commendations in the RTPI North East Regional Award for Planning Excellence in 2008 and received interest from across the country in terms of

'best practice'. However, it is unknown what happened to the formally submitted audit of the area, and whether or not such residents input under HMR will be used now by the GRP's employed architects. The withdrawal of HMR funding put an end to any further community engagement work. This engagement could therefore be understood as being performative in its aspiration to empower or build trust and is potentially hollow in its outcome.

Although the participatory design programme was not taken up by residents of Saltwell and Bensham to the extent that it was in Felling, several residents in Bensham and Saltwell encountered earlier stages of this engagement and recounted the following experience:

'They got some young women students from university to show us round the area and they patronised us – moving us around and telling us about it all the while giving the impression that this would be really good for the area; you will get a new house, it will all be better, buses will run on time, there will be more employment, Coatsworth Road will be a boulevard. They promised us everything.'

(Resident, March 2015)

Here we can see attempts were made to smooth the process of regeneration with residents by bringing external agents into the process. In steering participation (and by default diverting the focus away from the demolition of houses and subsequent displacement of residents) towards more abstract positive effects, participation is being used to try and align public opinion with the state-led regeneration. Using participation as a means to persuade or educate residents through 'expert' urban design standards and what can be considered as false promises (since often the replacement housing is unaffordable to many existing residents); a technique of manufacturing consensual persuasion within wider consensus politics, again aimed at attaining public 'buy in' (Paddison, 2009; see also Macleod, 2011).

In attempting to steer and limit participation and persuade residents in this way, there is an active attempt to smooth the process and circumvent potential opposition. This de-politicises regeneration, and such participation processes have been considered to form part of the post-political condition (Lees, 2014;

Mouffe, 2005; Ranciere, 1999, Zizek, 1999, Swynedouw 2007, 2009). However, the above extract reveals that certain residents were aware of such processes, and felt patronised by them, as opposed to feeling empowered or even included. This resident displays a lack of trust of those undertaking the participatory work, which limited the ability of them to persuade the resident. Therefore such attempts to de-politicise were not entirely successful as the resident remained political in the sense of retaining the ability to actively disagree or disengage. Consensus-building in this case is smothering conflict/dissent, but not extinguishing it (Lees, 2014; Mouffe, 2005). It de-politicises it, without removing the politics from it entirely (Crouch, 2004; Paddison, 2009; Lees 2014). Mitchell et al (2015) argue that it is better to understand this, not as post-political outright (cf Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011), but as an on-going and partial attempt at post-politicising. For Mitchell et al (2015), the post-political is more helpfully understood as achieving (or striving towards) hegemony, which allows for more open understandings of the political as we found in Chapter Six in Mouffe (2005).

The process of consensual persuasion through participation reveals the relations of instrumental and hegemonic power and the political processes at play within the local state. But what is also revealed is the lingering power of residents to resist such persuasion through disengagement or awareness. That the established hegemonic discourse was not overthrown, or even disrupted in such cases does not negate the presence of such forms of resistance, or the importance of them. Unlike Crouch's (2004) understanding of citizens taking less of an interest in such processes under the post-democratic condition, disengagement or dissatisfaction in this case can be seen as a political act of resistance. Whilst Mouffe understands consensus to be necessary to some extent, importantly she considers that it must be accompanied by dissent (Mouffe, 2005) and searching for an inaccessible consensus through such processes requires 'agonistic confrontation' (Mouffe, 2000:8-9). In effect, too much consensus or insufficient consensus both threaten democracy (Mouffe, 1993:6). This is perhaps an example of more a gentle resistance than Mouffe suggests is required, but its presence is no less important in understanding the sliding relation of the local

state and the public. The following section considers how the use of consultation further narrowed local understandings of democracy.

7.4.2 Constructing Consensus through Consultation

Community consultation for HMR was carried out between February and October 2005 by Social Regeneration Consultants (SRC), on behalf of Gateshead Council, not uncommon in the co-evolution of planning with expert consultancies (Raco et al, 2016). SRC specialise in community and neighbourhood regeneration, and produced a report in November of the same year. The consultation included stakeholder interviews, neighbourhood workshops, surveys, outreach sessions and drop-ins, and a summary of this is included in Appendix F. The consultation in Bensham and Saltwell on a range of options for regeneration found the following general conclusions:

- The neighbourhood is better physically and economically than many equivalent pathfinder areas and small scale change would make a big difference. Few residents advocated the option of ‘major physical change’ (SRC, 2005:26). There was strong support for the community and residents saw the area as having lots of benefits which should be built upon. Emphasis should be on conversion, remodelling and improvement of buildings. There was a strong support for the vision of the area but little belief that this should involve any significant demolition.
- The housing was considered to be of a decent standard by residents generally. There were however concerns with:
 - Social rented properties having high demand and low turnover.
 - Excess of Tyneside flats and shortage of family and larger housing and housing for elderly people
 - Too many bad landlords: controls needed
 - Housing is too dense with a lack of incidental open space

Following this consultation on various options, a single draft Neighbourhood Action Plan was produced in 2005, which identified streets intended to be

demolished, and those intended to be refurbished. A further door-to door survey and drop-in event for the streets effected was then carried out and found:

- 80% of residents were satisfied with their property in terms of meeting household needs (the size and layout) and just under 70% were satisfied with the general condition of repair of their property (SRC, 2005:44)
- From the survey 38% of residents agree with the draft Neighbourhood Action Plan and 23% disagreed (largely opposed to demolition). Of those with mixed feelings 30% wanted more information and 21% agreed with the regeneration of the area as a whole but were opposed to demolition.
- Those that agreed with the development, and a number of those with mixed feelings suggested that 'the success of any such regeneration will only be assured in the context of 'problem' families and individuals NOT being allowed back into the area' (SRC, 2005:46, original emphasis).
- At the final drop-in sessions 25% of people strongly supported the draft plan and 49% supported it to some extent. Opposition was higher in the areas of proposed clearance. Most people wanted to see changes to the draft plan (57% across the area and 60% in clearance areas, citing less demolition). People primarily considered that reducing the amount of clearance and focusing on modernisation and refurbishment was appropriate.

In its conclusions, the SRB (2005) report accepted that there was a high level of resident satisfaction with housing and the neighbourhood as a whole. It suggested that the preferred approach was for refurbishment and improvement works. However, in combining the lesser amount of people who supported the proposed Neighbourhood Action Plan with the larger amount of people who supported it to some extent (importantly they supported the refurbishment but not necessarily demolition), the consultation was shaped to conclude that there were high levels of support for the plan; 'the consultation process gave broad endorsement to the draft NAP' (SRC, 2005:76). Despite acknowledging that

people did not necessarily support demolition⁴⁷ (and certainly a high degree of people living on the streets proposed to be demolished), more general support for a softer form of regeneration was steered into support for the plan out right. In line with Lees' (2014) findings, extensive community consultation was drawn upon here. The response categories offered in the consultation allowed the attitudes of residents to be manipulated, thereby constructing community consensus for regeneration. In a similar way that the evidence base for HMR was manipulated as we saw in Chapter Five, the use of expert consultants was drawn upon here, and highlights the manipulation and steering technologies that were employed. Importantly agency for this manipulation appears to lie with the consultants, but it is unknown the degree to which the local authority were involved in this construction, or the relations between the two. As Parker and Street (forthcoming, 2017) suggest it is such relations in the co-production of 'knowledge' that are important to reveal.

Again, in a similar vein to the use of evidence resulting in an established discourse of decline that we saw in Chapter Five, the concluding manipulation of evidence in the consultation acted as justification and legitimisation of the regeneration. It provided an argument under the guise of evidence that local residents were saying:

'you need to do something radical here, and demolition was what was proposed by the community...it was led by the community, so they very much influenced the plan and had the opportunity to influence it'

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, February 2014)

The consultation process has therefore constructed community consensus, and steered the local narrative into the regeneration process being proposed by the community, which is a staggering leap to make. Such consent was confined to delivering regeneration, rather than influencing it (Webb, 2010). The clear

⁴⁷ It is worth noting that the Jewish community were surveyed separately, and (although not living in the proposed clearance area on the whole) were found to strongly support the NAP on the grounds of a need for larger family homes. There are local tensions in the neighbourhood over differing housing needs between communities, and the regeneration is potentially intensifying this tension. This was particularly the case with the Jewish community being strongly organized and having an influential political voice within the council, and influencing designs for later phases of development to suit their specific needs.

construction of consensus and subsequent twisting of motivations again results in de-politicisation (Crouch, 2004, Mouffe, 2005) and a foreclosing of local voices (Swynedouw, 2009) that smothers the political. However, the very act of this construction and steering is in itself political, and as we saw in Chapter Six, there remained agonistic voices locally in the Residents Association, who opposed the regeneration and as such it is not an end to the political (Mouffe, 2005; Lees, 2005), but a narrowing of democratic engagement, and wider understandings of democracy (Crouch, 2004). The use of the 'common good' is another way of evading the antagonism necessary in any democratic system (Mouffe, 1993).

This constructing of public opinion continued in the feedback sought by residents who had been displaced. A satisfaction survey was carried out amongst residents who have been re-housed, which officers have suggested has

'been very positive [about the process], a lot of them have come back from the end of it saying 'it's been the best thing ever in my life'.'

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, February 2014)

However, whilst this may have been the case anecdotally in some cases, the formal feedback that this respondent refers to came from a series of satisfaction surveys, the results of which can be seen in Appendix G. Importantly these surveys related to satisfaction with advice and support offered by the Neighbourhood Officers team, and they do not indicate overall satisfaction with the wider process which has been suggested here. Claiming such an outcome establishes a narrative of public support which justifies the regeneration, and placates officers in this difficult processes.

In examining the construction of consensus thorough both forms of participation and consultation, these findings go some way to reveal Paddison's (2009) question of 'who is speaking for the city?' A hegemonic discourse has been co-produced by the local state and a range of actors within and beyond it (consultants, Planning Aid, university students). Whilst the relations between the co-production of expert knowledge is unclear, what can be drawn from these findings is that the public has been increasingly side-lined through a construction

of consensus and a smothering of political and democratic engagement. As Mouffe (1993) warns, consensus is a balance, it is required to a degree but gaining too much renders democracy in peril. Space must be made for antagonism. Whilst positioning itself as a guardian of public interest (Purcell, 2016), the local state is simultaneously holding the public at a distance from itself through manipulative forms of consulting and participation that are *done to* the public. The following section considers what has followed these processes, under the new local state arrangement which sees a further narrowing of democracy.

7.4.3 Beyond Consensus: the ‘promotional’ local state

In the development of replacement houses in this neighbourhood, the GRP are acting under what is understood to be a mandate from the previous HMR process. In particular they are drawing on the consultation exercise discussed above as continued justification for the regeneration. The below interview extract with a respondent in the GRP discussing the new housing development highlights this:

I: Have you spoken to anyone from the surrounding houses?

P: They will have been engaged through the planning process, so their views sought in that at drop in events and letters.

I: But there has been no community participation before the planning application went in, it's just been the formal consultation?

P: That's right, but it all comes back to the starting point and the Neighbourhood [Action] Plan when we worked with the community to gather their opinions at that time, and produced a Neighbourhood [Action] Plan. This latest planning application is a continuation of that process, its what people wanted in the first place. It underpins what we do now. '

(Respondent in GRP, January 2016)

Here it is made clear that public participation or broader consultation is not considered to be required in the GRP delivery of the new housing because the local state knows it is '*what people wanted in the first place*'. This knowledge has

been gathered, as we have seen, through the manipulation of consultation on HMR over 10 years ago, and it is now being used here almost defensively in order to justify the current lack of public engagement. Although the GRP respondent acknowledges that there is a temporal nature to this; that it gathered '*opinions at that time*', this is not seen to be problematic in any way, instead the GRP is understood as a continuation of HMR; acting not only with the public's consent, but actively carrying out their wishes.

Whilst the reliance on questionable public consultation undertaken over a decade ago is a fairly weak justification for development today, an important point to consider here is that the majority of sites within the GRP portfolio were not HMR sites, and have had no previous forms of community participation or consultation. Furthermore there has been no public discussion over what sites were included in the GRP in the first place. Instead, the GRP are only undertaking the formally required public consultation at the planning application stage of each site; which invites comments or objections on the final proposed scheme. This is a clear shift away from earlier forms of participation and consultation, which despite being shallow and even manipulative, they were at least present and had the potential to be used in more genuinely empowering ways. Public engagement is now moving beyond consensus building, towards increasing exclusion outright.

When asked about the lack of public engagement in the partnership more broadly, and the long-term nature and scale of the GRP, a GRP respondent explained that consulting people on strategic matters was 'tricky' and 'messy and [would] have a very negative come-back on us'. It was said that seeking public opinion on issues that have to be viable is complicated and is understood to 'confuse' people. A respondent from Legal, Democratic and Property went on to say that the scale of the GRP's land portfolio and the long term nature of developing sites meant that it was difficult to engage with people, and there was 'limited worth' in doing that. This brings us back to earlier conceptions of public interest, and the discussion on the degree of disclosure being within (or against) the public interest. Understanding public interest is revealed here as a negotiable

value again, which is increasingly being side-lined in the prioritisation and procedural smoothing of housing regeneration and resultant economic development. The local state, as land owners and housing developers are sliding the notion of public interest towards economic understandings, a case of privatisation and commercialisation diminishing the public interest (Martin, 1993; Peck, 1995; Raco, 2013a). The effect on the local state is that it is depoliticising itself and moving it further away from 'the public good' (Gotham, 2001:290). However, instead of rendering the local state impotent to the future demands of people and politics as Raco (2013a) and Purcell (2008) suggest, here the local state is retaining control through its ownership of land and the partnership. Although the end result is privatization through selling the houses on the private market, it is a much more elongated process that retains local authority ownership and thereby control until nearing the end point of sale. This is important because it retains the possibility to regain political action and resistance.

It was however implied that consultation on the wider GRP partnership may be considered if the nature of the partnership changed:

'I suppose our aspirations for the partnership haven't changed yet, so yeah at this point I don't know that it would be entirely appropriate to invite an open consultation about the remainder of the portfolio sites and where we might do things differently. I can see that totally being the case if there was a view of this going in a different direction, and actually making this more of a vehicle to deliver money for the Council.'

(Respondent in Legal, Democratic and Property, January 2016)

The lack of public engagement is not understood as being problematic for the GRP, indeed it makes the land development process less *tricky* and *messy*. The suggestion that this might change should the GRP be used increasingly as an income generator to the council is just that: a suggestion. Because there is no current public engagement and increasingly less democratic engagement or representation within the partnership, as we saw in Chapter Six, it is difficult to see who would suggest introducing the difficult and un-obligatory process of engagement (through consultation), especially since it would have financial

implications. It is difficult to see the public interest re-emerging under non-financial expressions in such conditions.

The exclusion of public participation in the GRP was seen to be more problematic for other Council staff, who were less inclined to defend the lack of participation, but acknowledged that it was more of a problematic loss:

‘[The GRP] is basically a developer consortium where we have pooled our various resources, our sites etc., and come up with a build program over the next 15-17 years which unfortunately doesn’t afford much flexibility to bring in some of those added value engagement practices, because at the end of the day we are holding assets, we need to build out the sites in a market friendly way, and whilst I am sure my colleagues are doing everything they can to make sure local politicians and local communities are aware of the planning application and what’s going on, what isn’t happening is those really interesting and exciting and added value and engagement co-production models that we started out with.’

(Respondent in Culture, Communities and Volunteering, March 2015)

Whilst there is an acknowledgement that the local authority will be making sure people are ‘aware’ of planning applications through consultation, there is felt to be a loss of the more engaged forms of participation. The loss of funding for HMR and drive towards becoming a housing developer is clearly understood to come at the cost of public participation and engagement. Although we saw earlier that such forms of participation were not entirely innocent, their loss is nonetheless felt here, which is important in highlighting differentiated understanding and relations between the local state and the public within the local state itself. As we saw in Chapter Five, the partnership is changing the shape of the local state, and this is an emergent and tentative process where actors are not necessarily unified. Interestingly, the loss of participation is understood to come out of the inflexible and long-term nature of the partnership, a criticism similarly raised of PFI schemes by Raco (2013a). What is important here is that there exists a sense of loss within the local state, and this loss continues to be mourned. There is therefore a sense of an institutional memory present in the local state. Despite the hegemonic discourse of housing-led economic development, and acceptance of partnership working the local state is not unified in its actions (Cockburn,

1977a) but the actors and relations within the state, which ultimately constitute it, are less certain and retain memories of alternative ways of working. It is in such relations that there is the opportunity (or hope) to counter-act the established hegemony within the local state. This is something that was considered by The London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group (1980:77) in their book 'In & Against The State':

'As soon as you abandon the idea of the state merely as an institution, as a function, and begin to recognise it as a form of relations, a whole new way of struggle opens up.'

The loss of engagement and shift towards more market-orientated outcomes was felt by other officers; one in particular, when asked about the current resident engagement, at the time of on-going demolition said:

'We are not - there is no current proactive engagement. The next - I suppose, it's going to be promotional activity, obviously in relation to the development of the site. But there is no current on-going regular engagement with residents.'

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth January 2015)

Here it is not only acknowledged that there is no engagement, but that the next phase of future engagement is said to be *promotional activity*. This is a clear shift in how public engagement is being understood; to now incorporate marketing and promotion as a form of engagement. It is further evidence of the established marketized logic which has taken hold within the local state, where the public are understood more in terms of clients or consumers, rather than engaged citizens (Marquand, 2004). In the same interview, after going on to discuss the concerns of residents towards the new housing, the participant states that:

'I am sure the advantage we have got now with the Joint Venture starting on phase one, they'll be wanting to continue to engage with the community as they move forward to make sure that they are paving the way for the next phases, so there is an understanding of what's going to happen because there is always disruption and if you have kept people informed as you have gone on, it's not oh suddenly we are off now tomorrow, then you know hopefully it will be a smoother ride for the development.'

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth January 2015)

Not only does this highlight their understanding of engagement as a way of keeping people informed in a one way process as opposed to a two way dialogue, it is also purporting to be doing so to '*pave the way for development*', and '*make it a smoother ride*'. This smoothing over of potentially disruptive processes moves beyond earlier attempts at consensus building. Here the practice of consensual persuasion or construction is not even being attempted; the very semblance of consultation and participation are being bypassed and replaced with simply keeping people informed, with the expectation that doing so will result in the public conforming, and the local state having a smoother ride.

Public engagement has been shifted into the private sphere of marketing and promotion of the housing development, in a new form of local state engagement. The spaces for discussion, for conflict and dissent (however limited they were in the past) have now been almost completely removed, save for the formal planning application consultation. Space for the public, the demos, as engaged citizens within local housing development has been constricted to very particular and latter stages, when a series of decision making has already taken place behind the closed doors of the emerging local state. This has been done on the understanding that engaging with the public is a messy business, wherein 'the public don't understand how development works' (Respondent in GRP, January 2016). This is indicative of what Ranciere (1999:109) understands as the state legitimising itself 'by declaring that politics is impossible'. Although not quite said to be impossible here, the implicit sense of being *tricky* and *difficult* and a barrier to development results in the demos being slowly evicted. Importantly planning functions retain the statutory duty to consult, and so this is not a complete eviction, but a severe narrowing nonetheless of understandings of the maximal sense of democracy (Crouch, 2004).

Again, this process is therefore understood to be on-going but partial in its attempt to construct the post-political (Mitchell et al, 2015). It is increasingly moving decision making behind the scenes (MacLeod, 2013) of the local state,

which can be interpreted as Ranciere's (1999) modest state; where modern governments have a perceived shrinking role:

'But it is not so much in relation to itself as in relation to politics that the state practices such modesty. What it tends to make disappear by becoming so modest is certainly less its own apparatus than the political stage for exposing and processing conflict, the community stage that brought worlds together.'

(Ranciere, 1999:109)

Taking Ranciere's idea of modesty and rendering invisible, the following section moves on from the way in which the public are increasingly removed from engagement with the local state, to consider how the state is simultaneously removing its own identity publicly; to certain publics that is (Iveson, 2007).

7.5 The Local State in Disguise: Modesty and Immodesty

The following section considers the relation of the GRP to the public. In doing so it differentiates between different publics; 'the general public' as the demos, and 'public' as the local authority. Taking the general public first, it became evident through spending time in the neighbourhood that there was significant public confusion over who was building the new houses and particularly whom they were going to be for. The hoarding boards around the site advertise the newly named 'Trilogy Site' being developed by Linden Homes, with various finance agreements available (Figure 11).

Whilst residents were aware that the local authority had purchased the terraced houses and demolished them under HMR, people were less certain about who was now developing the new housing. Asking people their views on the development, I was overwhelmingly met with more questions myself, typically: 'will there be any Council housing?' 'Will there be social housing?' 'How much will they be?' 'Will there be houses to rent?'

Figure 11: The 'Trilogy' Development

Source: author, September 2016



This lack of awareness of who was building the houses or who they were going to be for was also found in community groups and organisations, with a local church worker telling me 'I am not sure who is building them, it's not the local authority, it will be some sort of housing trust'. I put this public confusion to the GRP in an interview as follows:

'I: With regard to the public perception of the partnership, I have become aware myself hanging around Bensham and Saltwell that people don't really know who is providing the housing, and what the housing is-

P1: Yeah, and then you notice there is not a GRP website, there is not, and the Council doesn't have - apart from one splash page of our regeneration - I don't think its particularly one of our goals to let the public know what GRP is because it might confuse things as far as we are concerned.

P2: Obviously trying to explain to somebody what we do, obviously as far as the public are concerned, they see the Linden Flag and Linden speaks for itself, its private and I think obviously that keeps the values up and they know what to expect and I think the Linden brand is getting more and more recognized within the North East.'

(Respondents P1 and P2 in GRP, January 2016)

It is revealed here that the GRP are deliberately not promoting, and thereby revealing the nature of the partnership to the general public. The reason offered for this active concealment is that revealing the true nature of the partnership would *confuse things*. ‘Things’ can be understood to be one of three things: the general public, and perhaps more importantly the housing market, and relatedly the ‘public’ identity of the local state itself.

Taking the general public first, concealing the nature of the development begs the question, where is the public interest in this? As we saw earlier, there is a broader set of questions around revealing or not revealing information, and the extent to which this is in the public interest or not. Here the GRP are seeking to maintain a distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ under the pretext that they are protecting the public from confusion. This appears to be a very skewed understanding of acting within the public interest. The GRP can be understood to be collectively producing ignorance (Slater, 2014); concealing information from the public for the ‘greater good’. This raises some serious questions around transparency and accountability and of course democracy more widely.

Secondly, it is implied here that the GRP are actively concealing the nature of the partnership so as not to confuse the housing market. Branding the development as a wholly private one is understood to ‘*keep the values up*’, and therefore profit maximization can be understood as a driving force for concealing the partnership. This comes back to the smoothing process that we saw earlier, moving further away from building consensus, and even keeping the public informed. Here, the GRP are deliberately not informing people in order to protect financial returns, and potential disruptions or claims; drawing a line between the previously contested HMR and the new ‘private’ development.

There is a deliberate attempt to separate ‘public’ from ‘private’ to the audience of the general public, when in reality these spheres are complex and bound up within this new form of local state. In creating the illusion of a wholly private development, we see the third way in which the GRP are not wanting to confuse

things; in actively hiding the identity of the local state itself from the public it ought to represent and be working for. This could reflect an awareness of an ontological distrust or anxiety of the state itself; what Foucault (2008 [1979]:78) would call 'state-phobia'. However, it is difficult to see who has state phobia in Gateshead, particularly as we have already seen ideological support for more Council housing from local politicians (in Chapter Six), support which was also found amongst many local residents too:

'they are building ninety nine houses, seventy three are for sale and the rest are to rent, it should be the other way around. There are not many Council houses now, not many can afford to buy.'

(Resident S8, April 2015)

It is perhaps therefore more accurate to suggest that the new local state arrangement is being hidden from the public in order for it to pursue its new marketized housing developer agenda; house values and profit maximization are the driving force behind hiding the nature of the local state. This rational is further revealed in the following interview extract:

'I: So do you think it would compromised the brand then if it were seen as a partnership?

P2: I don't think so, I just think obviously its something if you were looking to drive values up, if people see it as Gateshead regeneration, I think whether we like it or not and whether its part of the ethos - you know if you mention regeneration and people think its an affordable scheme it puts private people off, whether we like it or not, even speaking to people in the office, if you branded that as GRP people would say Gateshead Regeneration Partnership, its all going to be affordable, I think you go back to what you've - it just muddies the water, like I say I don't think it would do us any benefits in terms of the site... I am not aware of any local authority that sells private housing under their brand.'

(Respondent in GRP, January 2016)

Here we have an uncomfortable acknowledgement that despite the 'ethos' of the partnership, taken to mean the overarching regeneration of the area, it is implied that there is a stigma attached to affordable housing, or the local authorities involvement outright. There are therefore financial risks associated with being open about the nature of the partnership to the public. Again this concealment is

justified through not wanting to cause confusion, or '*muddy the water*'. The house value and potential profit maximisation has been prioritised over the softer elements of regeneration; financial interest has been prioritised above public interest. Ironically, the reinforcement of such a public/private binary by the GRP is arguably reinforcing the stigma that private developers provide 'quality' housing and local authority involvement would taint this in some way.

The notion of any local authority, or 'public' involvement in housing compromises the value and brand is an unconformable acceptance here, and immediately following this acknowledgement, another GRP respondent interjected:

P1: Yes, I mean the Council are incredibly proud, don't get me wrong I mean we do sing about it all the time and put in for all these awards, but there is a clear message that this is Linden selling and we want people to focus on this is a developer providing a product that is quality,

P2: [to up lift the area and add value]

P1: It muddies the water if people think its Council housing or see all the logos, there is possibly a stigma there that might impact on what we are trying to do.

(Respondents P1 and P2 in GRP, January 2016)

Here a stigma of 'public' involvement in housing provision is acknowledged outright. This is important in revealing the relations and identity within the local state, but also the relations it has with the general public. Having accepted that residents themselves were stigmatised under HMR as we saw in Chapter Five (see also Allen, 2008), here we are seeing an acceptance that moves towards anything 'public' being stigmatised. This is in accordance with what Marquand (2004) signals in his book 'the decline of the public', where there has been a systematic assault on autonomy of the state and the public domain. For Marquand (2004) this blurs the distinction between the public and private domains. However the findings here advance such claims as we can see that there is a reclaiming of autonomy within a re-orientated and reconstituted local state, one that is deliberately blurring the lines of public and private in order to carry out increasing market-driven policies and politics. The result is not a

shrinking of the state through privatization, but a growth of the local state in new ways. The local state have accepted the assault on its 'public' character, and have adapted their practice accordingly, by becoming *modest* in a very particular way (Ranciere, 1999).

Beyond perceptions of all things 'public' being somehow tainted, what is also revealed here are understandings of multiple publics. On the one hand the perception of a stigmatised Council is understood to be held by those people within the housing market. Here potential house buyers are one particular public from whom the GRP are masking their identity in order to not compromise house values. This public does not necessarily include the existing residents who as we saw, hold no such stigma towards 'public' housing. This is a clear separation of publics as existing residents are not the target market for the private development, they view/occupy the housing market from a different social position (Allen, 2008). There are therefore multiple forms of publics, which are not fixed in their definition, but are malleable and called into being at particular times (Iveson, 2007). What we can see here is a clear leaning towards prioritising and planning for a particular (home owning) public.

And yet there is also another audience, who receives an alternative narrative, or form of publication (Iveson, 2007); the professional housing industry. Whilst simultaneously acknowledging that the nature of the GRP is being actively concealed from the general public (and housing market), the GRP Manager conversely shows that the nature of the partnership is being actively revealed and promoted within the professional housing sphere. Here the local state are '*incredibly proud*' to be '*singing about*' the partnership, situating itself as a visible and innovative market actor in housing. Indeed they are seeking praise through professional awards, being held up as an example of good practice within the housing industry.

The local state is deliberately and strategically selecting (in Jessop's, 2016 terms) the audience or publics to whom they make themselves visible. They are in Ranciere's (1999) terms practicing a particular modesty, but also an immodesty,

depending on the particular audience. This duplicity reveals the local states understanding of different publics, but also the direction of this new local state arrangement which increasingly understands the home owning public as clients rather than citizens (Marquand, 2004). Certain publics (home owners and housing professions) are prioritised above others, leaving the non-home owning public increasingly marginalised, as all forms of social and affordable housing are reduced. The public interest has clearly given way to private interest, but importantly this is occurring *within* the local state under an increasingly marketized logic and autonomy/agency:

‘I kind of see your point, if it’s such a long term partnership and the Council do have a hidden role, but a role that they are able to influence what the partnership delivers through its role in the vehicle’

(Respondent in Legal, Democratic and Property, January 2016)

Importantly here the act of deliberately concealing the local state’s role as a long term housing developer reveals the local state’s power and agency through (and within) the partnership. It indicates that compromises are being made in understanding the public interests in order to pursue their partnership and housing delivery role. This is of course an injustice to the general public more broadly conceived as effectively the demos are increasingly being evacuated from this local state arrangement, which then goes on to conceal itself and its actions. This is symptomatic of a post-democratic local state, under what Manzi (2015) calls an ‘ideological crisis’ which sees decision making increasingly taken out of the hands of the democratically elected through concealed arrangements with developers. The following section goes on to consider how the more marginalised public are both understood by the local state and how they themselves feel towards such understanding and actions.

7.6 The Post-Regeneration Future for Different Publics: Narrowing Democracy

So far we have considered the current local states differentiated and subtle relations and understandings of and engagement with different publics. We have also seen the establishment of a narrative within the local state that renders all things 'public' as a threat to the aspirations of the private-facing housing development arm of the state. There is both a stigma of the state, and a stigma of the people and place that the state is seeking to regenerate (as seen in Chapter Five). It is now considered an appropriate juncture to consider the future for people living in this place. After a long and difficult journey through regeneration, what will living in this place be like for both new and remaining residents? Will the regeneration be considered to be a success by different publics and the local state?

Taking the point of view of the local state first, we saw in Chapter Five the way in which the stigmatisation of the place was used as justification for HMR regeneration in the first place, and indeed such a stigma was exacerbated through the construction of evidence which shifted territorial stigmatisation into the moral sphere of the stigmatisation of residents themselves. However, this stigma is also seen to be a challenge to the success of the regeneration. This can be seen through the below interview with a respondent in the Economic and Housing Growth Service:

'I mean obviously you hope above hope its going to be very popular and its going to be attracting people but it's, it's an interesting idea isn't it, the area itself, because of the location of it and the problems that were there before, we haven't completely transformed the perception of the area. I think we have still got environmental issues, we still, you know, we have still got some element of that continuous deterioration, that people do not invest in their properties, and its often the curb appeal side of things that gets forgotten about and that's what has the biggest impact sometimes. So I think there is always a worry that we are not dealing with the legacy because we haven't got the staff anymore to do it. So we have invested so much money, but are we keeping an eye on it? Have we really looked at enabling a community, or continually reminding the community of their responsibilities to the area, you know it's in their gift to pick up the litter,

not drop the litter, tidy the garden, clean the windows you know, basic stuff like that, behave well! So you wonder whether people will still see that and if you are buying a new house, what are your options, what would make you buy into this area as opposed to somewhere else?’

(Respondent in Economic and Housing Growth, January 2015)

Here we can see concerns that the *legacy* of the regeneration may not take hold; that restricted funding through cuts may compromise the ability of the local state to ensure they ‘*remind the community of their responsibilities*’, to ‘*behave*’. The language used here is moralising, and reveals a sense of superiority and authority over how the public should conduct themselves more widely. Of course, this is clearly referring to the particular ‘residual residents’ public. The other public, the ‘potential residents’ are also referred to, but only in the sense that existing residents behaviour and way of living may jeopardise the attractiveness of the area to such potential residents, or perhaps the potential value of houses. Aesthetics, or ‘curb appeal’, as we saw in Chapter Five is understood to be a key indicator of the housing market, so the concern that existing residents are not conforming, that the installation of new railings and walls on their properties (improvements under HMR) will not ‘trickle down’ into effecting their behaviour is a threat to the legacy or success of the regeneration over all; the stigma of the area will not be eradicated. The measure of such success will inevitably be house sales and prices, and so the local state is arguably seeking to close a rent gap in the area between the previous house prices and potential house prices (Smith, 1989; Watt, 2009).

The specific and exclusive view of the housing market established under HMR remains; what Allen (2008) would argue is derived from a position of the middle class and an obsession with home ownership. Here we can see that the public interest is also understood in middle class terms and economic terms (Leitner, 1990), by elites who consider it to be good for society (Schubert, 1962). Beyond this, there are again understandings of different publics, with different housing markets (as was indicated in Chapter Five), and yet here we can see that the mixing of the two is understood to be a threat to the regeneration. This threat

comes despite 'social mix' and 'trickle down economics' being a purported aspiration for the regeneration in the first place (as we saw in Chapter Two).

The regeneration was understood by many remaining residents, not as an opportunity to 'trade up' in property terms, but as both an economic and a social threat. Several residents that I spoke to had previously lived in homes that had been demolished, and had moved into similar rented properties on the streets that now face the replacement houses (see Figure 12). For these residents, there was also an awareness that the place remains stigmatised, and efforts to regenerate it may not be successful in removing this stigma:

Figure 12 : Old and new houses, Trevethick Street

Source: author, March 2016



'They are trying to make the place something it isn't. It's rough as a badger's arse here.'

(Resident S1, April 2015)

'Have you seen that programme Benefit Street? That's us here, we are known for it on this street, we could put them on the telly to shame'

(Resident S5, April 2015)

Unlike the local state's understanding of the stigmatised place, the residents do not acknowledge the 'potential' of the neighbourhood. Residents are aware of the politics at play in the regeneration in trying to change it, and there is a friction which could be interpreted as political in itself. Fundamentally the place is understood as '*rough*', but importantly there is also a sense of pride and belonging present here; a sense that '*that's us*'. Contentment at living in this place, alongside a self-depreciation, was found amongst many residents I spoke to, and indeed was an overwhelming finding in the consultation exercise for HMR we saw earlier. This sense of belonging alongside the awareness that replacement housing is not necessarily for them, (but is aimed at a different market, indeed a different public) was perceived to be a threat:

'There is going to be trouble when they move in. They will have to rent the houses out as the people who buy them will be too posh to live round here.'

(Resident S4, April 2015)

The warning of *trouble* here comes from an awareness of difference (between themselves as remaining renters and the potential new residents who can afford to buy the new houses) and a feeling of threat that this difference brings. New residents are expected to be 'posh' and not fit into the area as it is, and as such it is anticipated that they will not stay, but will instead have to rent the houses out. The socio-economic difference is felt through housing differentiation (owners versus renters, new houses versus old) and a sense of exclusion or unattainability. Whilst this difference is felt, there is also a strong material differentiation which can be seen. Figure 12 shows a photograph of the remaining terrace of Tyneside flats and the new replacement housing opposite. The difference in architecture, and even materials used in the mirroring pavements are visible, and clearly being translated to the remaining residents.

Since many residents can not afford to buy a Tyneside flat, but are renting from private landlords, there is a definite sense of existing residents being excluded from the new housing, and a resultant perceived tension between themselves and future residents. A record from my field diary of a conversation I had with five residents renting on Trevethick Street highlights this:

‘The residents clearly felt excluded from the new housing. They talked about their own poor housing conditions - yes they have had the railings and walls done, but inside it’s a mess and the landlords won’t do anything. They wish they could rent one of the new houses instead, but they couldn’t afford to buy one, so they started to joke that they would just move in one day before the builders put the doors on and claim squatters rights.’

(Field Diary, April 2015)

A strong sense of exclusion from the new housing and marginalisation as a result of being tenants was felt in talking to these residents. This was revealed in threatening language of there being *trouble* earlier towards new residents and here its revealed through discussing, albeit light heartedly, more radical forms of action like squatting. This anticipated conflict and discussion of alternative forms of action are in themselves political (see Vasudevan (2015) on politics of squatting). Although such political action is not being carried out, these feelings and conversations move some way to understanding a resistance to the housing development, and is itself political. Much like the example of disengaging from participatory planning methods that we saw earlier, they represent a more gentle embodied resistance, without being the ‘agonistic confrontation’ Mouffe (2000) understands to be necessary, but again its presence is no less important.

Chapter Six revealed an active group of residents who opposed the regeneration, and whose actions were foreclosed by the local state, which is understood to be a shift away from Crouch’s (2004) maximal sense of democracy which makes space, and indeed requires active citizenship through participation, and forming organisations. However, speaking to other local residents has revealed another public, one who were not necessarily overtly active in opposing the development, but who nonetheless feel opposed to it. For this group of residents, the public interest has not been understood to be in their social or economic interest, but in terms of improving the interests of potential home-owners. For such residents, regeneration has directly impacted upon them, and yet they remained publicly passive. A few residents that I spoke to had been displaced multiple times over the various cycles of regeneration that were outlined in Chapter Two, and there was an acceptance amongst such residents that the ‘Council will just do it

anyway'. The historic cycles of change are important in understanding people's reaction to the current regeneration, particularly one that has taken so long to come to fruition. Saturation of on-going regeneration could render residents as 'reduced to the role of manipulated, passive, rare participants' (Crouch, 2004:21).

For others, as we saw in earlier in Section 7.5, the deliberate veiling of the local state's role in the housing development has created confusion, which produces ignorance and is therefore dis-empowering. Whilst people still turn to the state as a solution to housing problems, keen to see Council housing, their imagination of the state (and of public interest) is of a previous time of stronger state provision of public housing. The contemporary local state is masking its role in a new form of housing delivery which increasingly responds to the demands of particular publics and wider economic development, or markets as we saw in Chapter Five. This leaves marginalised people confused and gradually ceasing to take interest in the processes; 'returning voluntarily to the position they were forced to occupy in pre-democracy' (Crouch, 2004:23).

At the time of research, the new housing was being built and at the time of writing was being sold. The first residents are beginning to move into the houses, and it would be interesting to consider in the future, what the residents (existing and new) feel about living in this place. The GRP are collecting marketing information on people who visit the new homes, and recording where people have moved from. Again this information was not available to me, as it was considered to be 'commercially sensitive'.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that public interest is being understood as a negotiable set of values, an intangible and undefined responsibility that as a result is sometimes present and sometimes absent from decision-making. Importantly, decisions being made in the public interest are never objective or transparent.

The local state increasingly considers the public interest to be a financial one; responsibility to the public is to protect the public purse and maximise financial returns to the local state. The public interest is therefore being deployed in specific and marketized ways, which in itself is a political act that attempts to justify state actions (Flatham, 1966) which when linked to financial gain become self-legitimising (Leitner, 1990).

We saw the differentiation between 'public' (as opposed to private) and the 'general public', which latterly was understood as multiple publics (Iveson, 2007). The separation of publics, and different actions or revelations afforded to them indicates a prioritisation and planning for a particular home-owning public, which marginalises non home-owners in an intensification of what Allen (2008) found in occupying the housing market from different social positions. Such a narrow and marketized understanding of both *public* and *interest* highlights the pertinence to consider what we are seeing as Rex and Moore's (1967) notion of housing class being more relevant than social class. This comes with the concern that we may be facing a return to earlier times of attributing citizen rights to property rights that we saw in Chapter Two. The marginalisation of groups outside the political community, and a narrow interpretation of the identity of citizens is a threat to democracy (Mouffe, 1993).

Through examining the relations both within the local state and between it and the public through engagement, the construction of consensus through both forms of participation and consultation were considered. These findings reveal the methods deployed in establishing and maintaining a hegemonic discourse has been co-produced by the local state and a range of actors beyond it. The public have been increasingly side-lined through a construction of consensus and a smothering of political and democratic engagement. However, despite the hollow and performative nature of both participation and consultation, the local state through the GRP have now moved beyond the construction of consensus and are no longer even seeking to appear to engage with the public, save for the formal planning consultation process.

The local state are not even taking on the superficial language of localism as Raco et al (2016) and Manzi (2015) found. Instead what we have seen is a clear move away from engaging with the public outright, unless statutorily obliged to do so. The local state maintains the legitimacy of an out-dated and questionable consultation process in this neighbourhood. This mandate and justification has then gone on to be geographically stretched to include the remaining sites in the GRP portfolio. There has been no strategic consultation on the establishment of the GRP, the public land it uses, or the way in which such sites will be developed. There is no democratic representation within the partnership, and yet the local state has established through the processes of consensual persuasion and consensus-building (and at times out-right manipulation) that it is not only acting in the public interest and knows what is for the public good, but that this is what the public want. The local state is now delivering private housing across the borough, in a way that eludes the public.

The findings in this chapter raise some important questions about the place of the public in such new governing arrangements. Importantly it has been argued here that such changes are helpfully conceptualised as forming part of a post-democratic state (Crouch, 2004). Moving beyond consensus building to new frontiers of market-driven relations which increasingly excludes the public is considered to be a political act in itself. Furthermore, there are examples of more gentle and embodied forms of resistance, through disengaging with participatory planning processes, and implied forms of activism. Whilst not conforming to Mouffe's (2000) more radical 'agonistic confrontation', they are nonetheless important in not conforming to totally 'passive citizens' (Crouch, 2004). However, there was a very real sense that Crouch's (2004:24) warning that increasingly responding to the demands of particular publics will disengage more marginalised citizens, who will then return 'voluntarily to the position they were forced to occupy in pre-democracy' (Crouch, 2004:23). As Marquand, (2004:3) suggests:

'Incessant marketization...has generated a culture of distrust, which is corroding the values of professionalism, citizenship equity and service

like acid in the water supply. For the marketizers, the professional, public-service ethic is a con.'

The findings in this chapter go some way to support Marquand's above quote, that a market-led hegemonic discourse has taken hold within the local state, and is corroding public equity (understood as differentiated publics) and housing provision (through private home ownership). Under such a trajectory, it is difficult to see how one respondent's (in Legal, Democratic and Property) implication that the state would re-politicise itself should it become even more market driven would take place, but importantly there is understood to be space to do so. Unlike Marquand's above assertion, we have seen how there are contested understandings of *how to deal* with the public within the state, and an institutional memory is present amongst professionals which provides a counter-narrative within the local state. This is important as it disrupts the fixed understanding of the state as unified or oligarchic -in Purcell's (2016) terms -and leaves space (albeit restricted) for alternative futures to be imagined.

8 Conclusions

There is a need to return to place-based research in order to understand the contemporary governing of housing, and governing more widely: to consider what is currently at stake in the deepening of entrepreneurial governance, and how processes such as financialization, self-funding, de-politicization and public engagement are unfolding in different places. Through examining in depth the historic development and redevelopment of housing in Bensham and Saltwell we have seen that housing is, and always has been political – used to maintain political and economic order whilst continually shifting poor living conditions from one place to another. The local state's intervention in housing continues to reproduce the 'Housing Question' anew, although today we are witnessing a far more complex and multi-faceted local state than in Engels' day. This thesis has moved some way to critically understand the nature of the contemporary local state through its relation with housing, and this final chapter considers the key arguments that have been made, reflections, contributions and future research.

8.1 Reflecting on the concept of the local state

The local state is an increasingly relevant concept and optic through which we can understand and frame the governing of housing, and governing more broadly. Drawing on the work of Cockburn (1977a), Leitner (1990), Cochrane (1993), Peck (1995) and Peck and Tickell (2002), the Gateshead Regeneration Partnership (GRP) and its actors can be identified as part of the local state. These works have been extended further through combining, empirically grounding and developing Jessop's (2016) most recent contributions to state theory: the strategic relational approach (SRA). Although it is argued that the nature of and relations within and beyond the local state must first and foremost be understood empirically, SRA offers useful conceptual tools to understand the local state as a fluid and relational ensemble, and crucially makes space for such conceptualisations to be flexible. That is not to deny the element of structure to the state, the hierarchies and systems in place; the apparatus for want of a better word. However, the notion of strategic selectivity allows the consideration of

such structures without absolute rigidity, understanding them as malleable, negotiable and permeable to key actors depending on the balance of social and political forces at any given moment. Indeed this was helpful in revealing the way that the GRP itself is transforming certain 'traditional' roles of the state that we saw in Chapter Six; bending specific functions through the negotiation or otherwise of specific actors.

Examining the relations within and beyond the local state contextualises and nuances understandings of decision-making processes, politics, the political and power. We saw the significance of this at various points in the thesis, most notably in the Leaders political journey in Chapter Six. Understanding power as a contingent expression of the shifting balance of forces, whilst simultaneously considering the relations of actors, has revealed that the state does not exercise power in a monolithic sense, but as Jessop (2016) makes clear; various powers are actuated by actors within it. As we saw in Chapter Five, political power was surrendered to officers through the deployment (and trust) of experts and evidence produced both outside of the local state, through *contracting-out* under Housing Market Renewal (HMR), and through the local state *contracting-in* the Gateshead Regeneration Partnership (GRP). Chapter Six also showed the balancing of power and ideology in decision making, with compromises being made both politically and professionally through relations of actors within the state and the public. Power is thereby mediated differentially through the local state at different times and under different conditions. Although the affect produced is often felt to be instrumental power over the public, importantly the agency of such power is variable and contingently realised. The local state is not a direct instrument of capital as has been considered in the past (Cockburn, 1977; Peck, 1995), nor is it oligarchic as Purcell (2016) suggests. However the deepening of entrepreneurialism within the local state is pressurizing the institutional organisation and relations within it. Cockburn argued that:

'my study is one of a situation and a structure and not one of personalities...it is *precisely because* of the caring and commitment of so many elected members and officers that it is important to understand the exact nature of the institution in which they work.'

(Cockburn: 1977a:3)

I argue that understanding the local state must take into account both structure *and* personalities, as well as their relations. For whilst Cockburn acknowledges the caring and commitment of individuals, as we have also seen, this thesis has revealed the way in which such individuals not only work within the local state, but constitute the local state. Their actions, their respective outlooks and their political dispositions can be instrumental in shaping decision-making and modes of governing, sometimes knowingly and sometimes not.

The presence and politics of these social and institutional relations has therefore to be foregrounded in a study of the local state. We identified this in various expressions of and reactions towards activism in Chapters Six and Seven, and through the on-going balancing of ideology and work amongst professionals and politicians in Chapter Six. The local state is not unified, but is an emergent and fluid set of relations. An important contribution that this thesis makes is empirically revealing that such relations, at a time of dramatic instability and change, are under pressure and are fragmented. So whilst there is an established hegemonic discourse and trajectory of governing - becoming increasingly entrepreneurial - this is in many ways contested by certain actors within the state. As we saw in Chapter Five, the formation of the GRP – in part a consequence of the frustrations on the dissolution of HMR - is transforming the relationships within the social base and the institutional form of the local state. However this is emergent and tentative, with various actors sensing that their roles are disjointed; suggesting a lack of institutional coherence. There was a separation of political beliefs from the work of the state having to be carried out, in some cases this resulted in a surrendering of political power to experts and officers.

Crucially there is an institutional memory present within the local state; actors feel particular changes in governing as a sense of loss that continues to be mourned, as we saw in Chapter Seven. This is a significant finding as it allows us to appreciate how the relations within the local state are not just immediate, but

are also enshrined in memories, both personal and institutional. This is important because it opens up or retains spaces of hope to counter-act current modes of governing. It is in such relations that struggles begin:

‘Because the state is a form of relations, its workers and clients, if they do not struggle against it, help to perpetuate it.’

(The London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, 1979:77)

The local state, as an analytical and conceptual tool has been useful to frame key findings, which the following sections of the chapter will go on to discuss in relation to the original research questions.

8.2 Research Findings and Reflections

The following sections consider the key research findings and reflections in relation to the research questions set out in Chapter One. These follow the themes of the local state in relation to the housing market, local politics and democracy and the public.

8.2.1 Fixing Housing, Funding the Local state

Research question one asked how the local state understands and engages with the housing market? Through examining both the previous housing regeneration initiative HMR and the subsequent GRP it is evident that there is a dominant and intensifying marketized and entrepreneurial understanding of housing within the local state. Advancing the work of Allen (2008), housing is not only viewed exclusively from middle class positions; there is also an understanding of multiple markets for various publics: a residual market for those in need of affordable private rent or ownership and an aspirational market being created for more wealthy home owners. Whilst this understanding of differentiated housing markets is dominant, importantly it was not unified but remained problematic for certain actors, particularly local politicians. Such actors contested the dominance, ideologically and the perceived power of the housing

market, and yet simultaneously they lent their support to both HMR and the GRP, each of which intensify market rule. A close examination of these relations has therefore revealed the contested nature of the local state and tensions within it, but more than this it has exposed the possibilities for things to develop in different ways in the future. For despite the perceived unity of and an established discourse on the housing market, the local state is not a unified ensemble but an active processing of the inherent contradictions and different relations within it: an expression of the balance of social and political forces (Cockburn, 1977a; Jessop, 1990).

In terms of how the local state engages with the housing market, we saw in Chapter Five the active deconstruction of it through experts and evidence, and its subsequent reconstruction through the GRP. Whilst I have revealed the fallacy of housing market failure; the notion having been constructed, or co-produced by the local state and consultants, it is nonetheless a notion that lingers. This is in part a result of the entrenched discourse of market failure at a local level, but at a national level. The recent Housing White Paper (2017) entitled 'Fixing the Broken Housing Market' is testament to this continued notion that the housing market is failing and in need of state intervention. The reality is the housing market is doing exactly what a market does, especially when propped up by central state to do so, through finance schemes like Help to Buy.

The housing market has always failed some people, as we saw through Engels' prescient Housing Question in Chapter Two. However, it is not a failing market. It is labelled as such only when its inherent inequality begins to affect a wider group of people - notably the middle class - for whom house prices are becoming increasingly unaffordable. And yet this national picture is not the experience we have witnessed in Bensham and Saltwell, where house prices are relatively low. Here the housing market was understood to have failed because it did not keep up with the pace of the market elsewhere. Aspiring to renew the existing housing market, to inflate it, at a time when other parts of the country are struggling in the opposite direction was not lost on some respondents; 'its not bad up here, but in London you hear these horrific tales...paying £350,000 for a bedsit, and

you don't want that, you don't want that at all.' (Ward Councillor, March 2015). There is a marked and differentiated geography of understandings of and interventions in housing markets, and yet there is a commonality across them of labelling of the housing market as failing (often for different reasons). This labelling of failure detaches the state's active role and responsibility in the market, implying the market is an agent in its own right, when we saw in Chapter Three markets are in themselves social constructions, which the state is in part responsible for. By calling a failed market into being, the state thereby creates a space for it to further act, to solve the problem it fabricated. Housing market failure (or crisis in some instances) is therefore understood as a political and economic construction, which legitimises and further intensifies state intervention.

We are witnessing a moment of transition in the local state, not a new era entirely but following a period of slow economic growth and austerity localism since 2010, the ability of local governments to deliver services has been undermined. This, coupled with the increased pressure to become self-funding through the withdrawal of the Revenue Support Grant by 2020 are conditions under which the local state in Gateshead is deepening its marketized understanding of housing and entrepreneurial governance more widely. As local governments across the country turn to housing as well as property and land more widely as an income stream, there is a demand to understand how such processes are unfolding.

This research has revealed particular ways through which this entrepreneurial governance has developed from the ashes of a mired central regeneration programme. The GRP is moving the local state into a later phase of entrepreneurialism, but importantly not beyond it as Peck (2017a) indicates. The local state are reconstructing the housing market by harnessing private finance, not only in this neighbourhood, but by becoming a long term housing developer across the borough of Gateshead. The inclusion of nineteen publicly owned sites sees the local state building houses for private sale and making an immediate return. However questions remain about how this relinquishing of assets can

amount to a sustainable solution to a longer-term trajectory of self-funding: there is simply not an infinite amount of land. The push for authorities to become 'innovative' under austerity is unfolding differently across places. Whilst we saw examples of other local authorities growing and retaining their assets and returns, allowing them to cover statutory obligations, Gateshead are shedding their assets for a more immediate return. Whilst there are problems in both approaches and questions to be raised about transparency, accountability and conflicts of interest, there appears to be an underlying uneven geography to this mode of governance, with more affluent district councils such as Sevenoaks able to invest and speculate in order to accumulate over the long term, whilst ex-industrial metropolitan councils such as Gateshead do not have the funds to make such investments. Housing as well as land and property more widely is entrenching a new form of state entrepreneurialism and uneven development.

A feature of this new form of entrepreneurial state is capital switching through financialization. Whilst a limitation of this research has been the methodological difficulty in establishing the full nature and extent of financialization within the GRP (due to the hidden nature of legal agreements and financial details) what we have witnessed is a harnessing of private finance into the local state, thereby becoming reliant upon it and the housing market more broadly. I have argued that this is therefore a form of financialization; the way in which this process is transforming the local state institutionally and through increased risk taking is testament to it being what Aalbers (2016:4) calls financialization '*of and through the state*'. However, this appears to be an early stage of financialization compared to examples offered by Weber (2010); Peck and Whiteside (2015) and Beswick and Penny (2017) in that the extra level of selling income streams or the ability to develop housing onto financial markets is not happening, or more accurately it is not known to be happening. Financialization has been used in the context of this research flexibly and cautiously (Christophers, 2015b). It is the specific, small and mundane changes that have been identified (Langley, 2008) which move towards dislocating financialization as a monolithic force. This highlights the importance of detailed local research to be precise about what exactly it is that is happening and being labelled as such whilst making such

processes visible in order to contest them (Madden, 2017). Far from being entirely 'technical' and thereby neutral, the techniques and complexities of financialization are deeply political, and must be understood as such. Examining the relations within the local state has revealed the deliberate way in which such processes are actively hidden, with commercial activity being prioritised above transparency and public scrutiny. This is a political move and reveals the current form, function and trajectory of the local state, not to be understood as unified as we have seen. The importance in revealing such techniques and relations is in orientating housing and the local state away from finance and back to understanding it as a home; a right as opposed to a cash cow.

Whilst the local state in Gateshead is shrinking under austerity localism in particular ways, through funding cuts and a resultant reduction in service provision and employment, it is simultaneously growing in other ways - specifically though its new role as a housing developer and insourcing of different actors. The state is not simply acting as a regulator and approver of regeneration projects, this is not the 'state-organised unburdening of the state' as Raco et al (2016), (drawing of Offe (2009)) have found in London. Here responsibility, risk and business is being contracted *into* a newly arranged local state, not contracted out. This may be down to a geographical difference between localities; and the conditions under which deindustrialised northern authorities may be very different to the form and function of that of central London authorities, which was the subject of Raco et al's (2016) case study. This highlights the importance of researching different locals for whilst there are key patterns across all local states the techniques and practices varies considerably, requiring different explanations and even political solution.

As the local state strides to become self-funding through its increased intervention in housing and the housing market, it must be remembered that housing and its relation to the state is increasingly political and unequal. There is a growing urgency to understand this as the recent tragedy at Grenfell Tower in

London⁴⁸ reveals. Housings growing importance as an income stream opens up important questions around the role of the local state; transparency, accountability, and the place of politics, the public and democracy more widely, which the following sections considers.

8.2.2 A Post-democratic local state: hope for the political?

Research question two asked what is the place of local politics and democracy within the local state's housing intervention? The SRA makes space to consider that politics and the political takes many forms, and we saw this through both consensus and conflict, again through closely examining the relations within and beyond the state, but also through archival work and document analysis. We saw in Chapters Six and Seven historic and recent forms of activism which had variable outcomes; being accepted into the state structure through the example of the leaders political journey, whilst being excluded as such in the case of recent resident association activism - both over housing.

Considering the power relations and various sources of pressure within the local state as Leitner (1990) and Jessop (2016) have suggested is of great significance. Doing so has revealed the condition of local politics and the extent to which the local state understands and engages with the political and wider democratic processes of governing. We saw the various ways in which consensus and participation has been manipulated and channelled in Chapter Seven, and how such *messy* processes are now being replaced by *smoother*, more marketized understandings of development *promotion*. Also through the example of conflict with the residents association, we saw a struggle for representation and legitimacy, and a revelation of what the local state considered to be 'properly

⁴⁸ At the time of writing Grenfell Tower, a public housing tower block in North Kensington (managed by a tenant management organization) was subject to a fatal fire. Believed to start in one flat, the fire accelerated due to the recent application of external cladding materials that were not fit for purpose. The local and national government were accused of ignoring warning of such dangers- from both industry in relation to the cladding, and from residents of Grenfell Tower themselves in relation to fire safety concerns more broadly (means of escape, exposed gas pipes and lack of sprinklers). It appears that cost was prioritized over safety, with tragic results.

political'; an antagonistic opposition to the local state. This opened up conceptual questions of what counts as politics and/or the political, wherein Mouffe's (2005) understanding of the political as a more fluid and less prescriptive sense is considered to be more helpful to understanding such actions.

A closing down of opposition, directing of political action into juridical and procedural routes (Raco et al, 2016) and channelling political action within local state politics has been revealed, and this undoubtedly has contained and marginalised political action. Whilst such actions are often framed as post-political, a closer examination of the relations of actors within and beyond the local state revealed two things. Firstly, there is as much a struggle over representation *within* the local Labour Party, and a move to separate activists from the legitimacy of elected representatives within the state. Secondly and relatedly some state actors felt limited by their role within the state; trapped between their political beliefs and a desire to deliver regeneration. The positioning of the residents association outside of the state - as an enemy - closed down the potential to achieve common spaces or alternatives. I argue that this is less a case of post-politics, and more an inherent contradiction of local state politics specifically, it is Mouffe's (2000) democratic paradox and Miliband's (1972) conception of the political party structure legitimising the local state. So whilst politics are never fully foreclosed, they are limited through actions and structures that are themselves inherently political, but less overtly. The structure of democracy still exists, but conflict and consensus is being replaced by pragmatic decision making and outputs, as Raco et al (2016) also found in the case of South Bank, London. Politics is being confined to that of the 'possible' defined by the few (Ranciere, 2005).

This is what Crouch (2004) understands as a return to pre-democratic times. It is perhaps the scaling down of our understanding of democracy, where activism is no longer included as an acceptable form of democratic action. Within the current climate there is a loss or suturing of political debate or Mouffe's agonism within the local state. However, the potential to regain these remains present and has been revealed through some of the relations examined; with political and

professional actors having conflicting views and personal struggles, or by residents who displayed a growing discontent locally with the status quo of Labour, who are considered to have been in power for so long that they have become managers of the council. It is these spaces that hope for alternative, increasingly democratic (in the maximal sense) ways of working can return. Indeed there has been a recent rise in housing activism in London, notably through the occupy movement, the New Era Estate and Aylesbury Estate (Watt and Minton, 2016), which also highlights a clear geography to different conditions and resulting activism unfolding differently across the country.

A key contribution that conceptualising the local state makes in this research is that it departs from other understandings of democracy being removed from local government, and simply replaced by business. Whilst Crouch (2004:41) understands government as divesting itself of autonomous competencies under a 'poverty of state's knowledge', conversely the local state here is actively harnessing new marketized and financialized forms of knowledge and practice and re-shaping its ideologies and practices accordingly, although not in a linear and unified way, but tentatively negotiating this process. Whilst the GRP dislocates politicians from the publics they represent, through a transferring of political power as we saw in Chapter Six, importantly this process is a creeping, narrowing or channelling of political power and democracy into the hands of new state actors. The term de-democratising is therefore preferred. Through seeing the state as an emerging and fragile set of relations that retains an institutional memory and structure of democracy, the potential to disrupt such de-democratising processes also remains. We saw in Chapter Seven more gentle and embodied forms of resistance through disengaging with participatory planning processes and implied forms of activism – which not radical forms of agonistic confrontation in Mouffe's (2000) understanding – are nonetheless important in revealing that whilst residents many not be visibly active, they are neither 'passive citizens' (Crouch, 2004), but retain their own political power.

8.2.3 Housing the public in the new local state

Research Question three asked how does the local state perceive and interact with the public through housing? How do the public perceive the local state and feel towards such changes? We saw in Chapter Seven that there is a differentiation between types of publics; firstly in the sense that the state itself is public - as opposed to private – (Purcell, 2016) and secondly in the sense of the general public as the demos. Understanding the local state as ‘public’ has been positioned as problematic through being stigmatised, and ironically this has resulted in the local state actively concealing its role within housing development - in order to maximise financial returns. There are also understood to be multiple ‘general public’s’ (Iveson, 2007; Mahony et al, 2010), which are being separated and managed in particular ways. As indicated earlier, different markets are understood to serve different publics: potential homeowners, and exiting residents (both renters and homeowners). That different publics are treated differently by the local state: by being built and sold aspirational new homes, or conversely having their homes demolished, highlights the increasing relevance of Rex and Moore’s (1967) notion of a housing class as opposed to social class. We are perhaps at risk of returning to a time of equating citizens’ rights with home ownership.

The inherent contradictions within the local state are often understood in paradoxical terms; Jessop (2016) understands the state as one ensemble amongst others, but one that has overall responsibility and interdependence of different ensembles. It is here that Gramsci’s contribution to the state consisting of both part of and all of society is helpful in understanding the public in relation to the state. Chapter Seven considered the notion of public interest as a way to reveal the state’s understanding of the public in particular ways. Here it was revealed that public interest, whilst understood as a negotiable set of values - sometimes present and sometimes absent from decision making – is increasingly understood as being in the interest of the *local state as public*. The financial interests of the local state are positioned as paramount, with a responsibility to *the general public* to maximise returns to the local state as it becomes self-

funding. The inherent contradiction, the balancing of various responsibilities within the state is tipping, albeit reluctantly in part as we have seen, away from social responsibilities towards economic survival, and the public are beginning to be understood in very partial and particular ways as a result; the key finding of the debate on urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989; Leitner, 1990).

This shifting responsibility was also found through tracing the way in which the local state engages with the public. In Chapter Seven it was revealed that a shift away from earlier forms of participation and consultation, which however problematic they were, are now being replaced by the minimum statutory requirement of consultation on individual developments, and even forms of *promotion* of the new housing development. This is being done in part through funding cuts, but also to avoid the *tricky* and *messy* process that opens the political sphere to more strategic consultation. The aim is to *smooth* the development process by not only actively disengaging the public, but by *hiding* the role of the local state in development, in order to maximise house price sales. There are therefore multiple factors which have combined and resulted in the local state not only redefining the public as we saw earlier, but also side-lining the public, and in some cases quite patently side-lining locally elected representatives. Again, there was an established trajectory of this way of working, but this was being done with a sense of regret within the local state. There are contested understandings of *how to deal with* the public within the state, which has been revealed by examining the relations within it. The presence of the institutional memory, compromises and balancing within the local state are relevant to understandings of the public, and again provide space for potential alternative ways of working with the public.

In terms of how the general public perceive the local state and feel towards such changes in housing, this was a more complicated question to answer overall. Not least because *the public* as we saw in Chapter Seven takes multiple forms and is called into being at particular times (Iveson, 2007; Mahoney et al, 2010), but also the local state imagines different publics and responds to them in different ways. In speaking to local residents, I found a variety of different attitudes towards the

state, with some people possessing multiple and conflicting attitudes, for example: trust, dis-trust, exclusion, inclusion, support for the regeneration, opposition or anger at the regeneration. In simple terms, people's attitude towards the state varied in accordance with their particular experience of it. The on-going nature of the regeneration meant that some attitudes had hardened, whilst others had softened over time, and methodologically I was limited in offering a fully accurate representation of this spectrum, which is a constraint in researching relations beyond their immediacy. However, what can be drawn from existing residents in the immediate vicinity of the housing development is two things. Firstly the deliberate attempt of the GRP to masque the development as wholly private in order to heighten house prices is being felt; residents are confused as to who is building the houses, raising questions to me about the nature of the development, tenure types and who the development is for. *Who the development is for* is a pertinent question to pose, and one that leads us onto the second finding – local residents were aware that the development was not for them, they sensed their own marginality, a factor that resonates closely with Wacquant's (2008) research on social and territorial stigmatisation. There is an underlying resentment towards new residents and it would be interesting to follow up this research by investigating how this structure of feeling manifests in the future, and how new residents experience living in this place in light of this potential hostility.

8.3 Contributions and limitations of the research

The following sections draw together the theoretical and methodological contributions that have been made following the earlier key findings and reflections. It also sets out the limitations of these

8.3.1 Theoretical contributions

The main contribution to theory derived from this thesis is grounding and developing Jessop's (2016) SRA approach to understand contemporary changes in local governance, conceptualised as the local state. Through understanding the local state as a flexible ensemble, I have drawn upon SRA to conceptualize the GRP as part of the local state, and to understand the changes to the structure of the state and modes of governing, not with rigidity or permanence, but as emergent and on-going. Importantly this has been extended further to reveal the ways in which the state is under negotiation, and contestations are important in leaving space for future change.

SRA had focused the analytical lens through which I have considered the relations and power of actors –old and new- both within and beyond the local state. It is the revelation of such relations that has enabled a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the complexity and multiplicity of such changes; particularly in the layering of historic decisions and trajectories with more immediate local and national transitions (to regeneration policy locally and austerity more widely). In particular a close examination of the relations within the local state has reaffirmed that the local state is not a monolithic or unified ensemble. Combining such a flexible and relational approach to state theory at a local level, and combining this with housing, entrepreneurial governance, financialization, politics, post-politics, democracy and the public has opened up the local state as an increasingly relevant useful conceptual tool across various disciplines most notable urban geography, planning and housing.

Whilst this research has first and foremost been led by empirical investigations, the SRA has been a helpful theoretical framework through which to frame such findings, which I will continue to develop flexibly and not exclusively in future research. Although a lesson to learn from past local state theorising, and one the SRA remains vulnerable to, is to resist making a theoretical leap from the particularities of one local state and reify *the* local state. It is important to underline the value of grounded empirical investigation, analysis and theorising

of individual local states: a place-based approach from which a geography of the local state could be built up, but not vice versa. Duncan and Goodwin's (1988) uneven state thesis is ever present and uniqueness of place must be accounted for, not stretched to account abstractions of a wider state.

8.3.2 Methodological contributions

Researching the local state empirically has used several methods for particular purposes, and has presented some challenges as we saw in Chapter Four. The methodological tools offered here speak to future research on the state (more broadly conceived) and on researching issues that are deliberately difficult to access through singular methods. Combining in-depth interviews, with more experimental techniques such as the exercise of organising theme cards as well as document analysis and importantly more ethnographical methods of hanging around opened up spaces in more formal interviews through which I could reveal particular relations and interconnections. Taking a mixed methods and flexible approach allowed me to challenge particular attitudes and relations, to go beyond the 'interview performance' and reveal more intricate and contested understandings and relations. However, examining social relations over a period of time is more complex, and was better suited to recent rather than historic understandings.

Whilst issues of transparency and commercially sensitive information were not fully revealed in this research – an important finding in itself – there are techniques such as freedom of information requests that could be used to reveal such information. This was not something that was pursued here in order not to compromise the relations I had established, and this is a balance that must be weighed in conducting deep empirical research that seeks to maintain future relations. However, there is a strong case to be made for pursuing such requests in order to reveal the true nature and extent of such working.

Researching this particular local has been experimental, and whilst some techniques worked better than others, future research on the local state should continue to be experimental and flexible, and above all geographically sensitive; grounded in a particular place.

8.4 Contribution to practice

The local state is facing dire challenges under austerity localism; politically, professionally and personally; many respondents are aware of *some* of the challenges revealed in this research, be that the implication of funding cuts, the pressure to work in particular ways, or confronting the possibility of their own unemployment. I had several conversations with Council officers who described their roles as metaphorical ‘fire fighting’; dealing with a loss in capacity as well as the scale and immediacy of demands, without the space to reflect or think about their actions. This is a key contribution that this research offers; a critical reflection of the current mode of governing and a revelation of the both the seen and perhaps unseen challenges that the local state faces. These are of course immediate contributions to make to local government and local politics, however it is evident through emerging research elsewhere (Raco et al, 2016; Beswick and Penny, 2017) that there are particular trends of entrepreneurial governance, pressure to become self-funding through housing and property, loss of transparency and a narrowing of democracy. The findings of this research speak therefore to a wider audience of local states and the central state, policy makers, planning, housing and regeneration practitioners and politicians at various levels nationally and internationally.

8.4.1 Local Government

A report to local government, which highlights the key findings of this research alongside recommendations, will be made. Particular attention will be drawn to the risks associated with the GRP; firstly in terms of it being an un-sustainable model of income. Here alternative approaches being used by other local

authorities, which may enable the retention of assets and increased financial security will be offered. Secondly the risk of increasingly narrowing democratic and public involvement in such processes will be highlighted. A reflective analysis, which moves to support and counter, the immediacy of decision making and governing is a valuable contribution to make at this time.

Dissemination of such findings must be done sensitively in a clear, transparent and creative way (DeLyser and Pawson, 2005). It must also be done in an on-going way which brings practice into conversation with academia, meaning I listen and learn from any reactions to the findings, taking account of both the privileged and partial nature of research.

8.5 The future of the local state

The local state is back, but not as we knew it: it is now a housing developer in many cases. The importance and urgency of framing such changes in governance at this time as the local state, empirically, analytically and conceptually, has been made. There is an urgency to uncover, through deep empirical investigations, the differentiated geography of local states: what do they consist of? How are they engaging with housing, land and property? What processes and techniques are being undertaken to become increasingly self-sufficient? What place do local politics, democracy and the public have in such arrangements?

Through investigating the fluid, negotiable and contestable relations within and beyond the local state, future research should seek to advance by nuancing the complexity and multiplicity of contemporary local governing; revealing the nature of decision making, and importantly the spaces of hope for alternative ways of encountering housing and the local state.

Appendix A: Findings of the Scoping Exercise

Following the scoping exercise carried out in February, 2014 the following four themes emerged:

History/Heritage

The 'Urban Design, Heritage and Character Report: Bensham and Saltwell' (GVA Grimley, 2006b), produced as part of the evidence base for HMR (see Appendix C) identified that the historic fabric of the area is special in terms of its architecture and heritage with a strong sense of place and distinctiveness, which was said to be important to the people living there. This sense of people's connection to the past and wider history of the area was brought out in Gateshead Council's film 'Gateshead: No Stranger to Change'⁴⁹ to promote HMR. Here it was claimed that this sense of history can be *nurtured* through regeneration. In contrast to this opinion, the Saltwell and Bensham Residents Association and SAVE Britain's Heritage pressure group have been actively resisting such regeneration on the grounds that it erodes the history and heritage of the area. The review of the documents also revealed that there are clear links of the impact of past regeneration initiatives with future ones. This presents a compelling case to consider both the sense and use of heritage in the regeneration process and to consider the history of past regeneration.

Design

GVA Grimley (2006b) were highly critical of past planning and regeneration initiatives in the area and considered that they did not respect the existing historical layout of the area but instead reduced physical connectivity and weakened the overall character. Interestingly, the most recent planning permission for replacement housing following the demolition of Victorian

⁴⁹ 'Gateshead: No Stranger to Change' film was produced by HT Media on behalf of Gateshead Council, and can be viewed at:
<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/Building%20and%20Development/LiveGatesheadLoveGateshead/NoStrangertoChange/home.aspx>

terraces follows similar dis-connecting design features, which raises questions over the lessons learned from past regeneration.

Representation

It is evident from the interviews and the review of online forums that there are strong tensions in the area over community representation and democracy. There are also cultural obstacles in engaging all members of a community in regeneration.

Resistance

Despite active resistance from the Bensham and Saltwell Residents Association and Save, there has been very little resistance from residents who live in the demolition streets, which is in stark contrast to the experiences in other HMR areas (see Allen, 2008; Minton, 2012). No houses to date in Bensham and Saltwell have been compulsorily purchased. There has also been very little representation to the planning application for replacement housing from residents whose housing surrounds the demolished sites. Professionals within Gateshead Council consider this lack of resistance to be a result of extensive community consultation and engagement as well as an acceptance of the need for such regeneration.

Appendix B: Confirmation of ethical clearance



Department of Geography

Research Ethics Geography Sub-Committee (REGS)

Minutes

17th February 2015, 10:00

W400 / W215

Present: Dr Paul Harrison (Chair), Dr Nick Rosser (Deputy Chair), Dr Robert Hilton, Mr Philip Dennis.

Apologies: Dr Rachel Colls, Dr Jen Bagelman.

In Attendance: Ms Freya Copley-Mills (Secretary).

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dr Rachel Colls and Dr Jen Bagelman.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting on 26th November, 2013

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Business and Policy Meeting

The Chair reiterated the intention to arrange a business and policy meeting before the start of the next academic year, now that the committee is once again able to achieve quoracy.

b. Online Form Output Format

The Committee noted that the output format of the online forms has been improved and is now somewhat more user-friendly, though improvements remain to be made. This will be followed up with the departmental communications staff.

Action: FCM

4. Chair's Business

a. New Lay Member

The Chair extended the Committee's thanks and welcome to Mr Phil Dennis as the new lay member of the committee.

b. Terms of Reference Update

The Chair noted that the planned Committee Terms of Reference have been completed and examined by the last Board of Studies. No significant changes were made. REGS continues to report directly to the faculty Ethics Committee. Research Committee may ask for an extraordinary meeting of REGS in the event that a complaint is made regarding the ethical conduct of research under the department's authority.

c. Delay Between Meetings

The Chair noted the substantial delay between quorate meetings of the committee. This was caused by the lack of a lay member of the committee, and the extensive difficulty in recruiting a replacement. It transpires that other departments have the same difficulty, and that there is no faculty-wide or centralised assistance available. Attempts to clarify the expenses policy, training requirements etc are ongoing. The Chair noted that this meeting will primarily be clearing of the application backlog.

5. Review of Staff Ethics Applications:

- **PR0000 - Sue Lewis/Clare Bamba,** [REDACTED]

- **PR0000 - Phil Steinberg,** [REDACTED]

- **PR0000 - Antonis Vradis,** [REDACTED]

- **PR1748 - Clare Bamba et al,** [REDACTED]

- **PR1819, Laura Turnbull,** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- **PR1876, David Milledge,** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- **PR1887 – Matthew Brain,** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- **PR1889 – Natalya Reznichenk,** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
- **PR1895 – Nick Rosser,** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

**6. Review of Postgraduate Student Ethics Applications:
Approval confirmed for:**

- **Laura Bezzina**
- **Arely Cruz-Santiago**
- **Peter Forman**
- **Elena Grimoldi**
- **Julia Heslop**
- **Geraint Jenkins**
- **Emma Kindell**
- **Kate Matheys**
- **Ingrid Medby**
- **Rosalind Oates**
- **Emma Ormerod**
- **Hannah Ruszczyk**

- **Maria Luisa Sanchez Montes**
 - **Sam Slatcher**
 - **Sam Slatcher**
 - **Andrew Telform**
 - **Kasper Weilbach**
- 7. Any Other Business**
- 8. Date of the Next Meeting**

Appendix C: Summary of evidence base documents analysed

Document	Date	Authors	Summary
Gateshead Urban Landscape and Townscape Assessment (ULTA)	2004	Gateshead Council, BNG, English Heritage and North of England Civic Trust	As part of the 'fact finding' stages of HMR, Gateshead Council identified 28 Vitality Index Areas (VIAs), which the North of England Civic Trust went onto assess. Areas were described, analysed and rated in terms of criteria such as land use, access, views, urban form, heritage, safety, open space etc. The relevant VIAs for this case study were analysed.
Bensham and Saltwell Neighbourhood Housing Analysis	Undated	Nathanial Lichfield and Partners	This report offers statistics and analysis on housing indicators of supply; stock type, location, profile, condition, tenure mix, house prices, market, income, void properties, demand. A sustainability matrix is produced which weights the following variables: index of multiple deprivation (2004), bench marking of house prices against Gateshead average, voids (2005), % private rent (2001) and % social rent (2001). It highlights 'driver of decline' in the area; the stock profile not being aspirational according to market research and not suitable to retain families, high amount of private rentals, demographics of the area, quality of the environment
Gateshead HMR Stage 2: Neighbourhood Action Plans: Consulting with residents	2005	Social Regeneration Consultants	Reports findings from a programme of community consultation in four HMR areas (Bensham/Saltwell, Deckham, Felling and Teams). Consultation ran from February to October 2005; stakeholder interviews; resident workshops, household surveys, school programme, outreach, community drop ins, exhibitions in Civic Centre. Key findings were in general it's a good place to live, but with opportunities to improve the overall environment and quality of life. Large scale demolition not found to be necessary or appropriate although there are pockets where targeted demolition may be appropriate, Bensham and Saltwell is better physically economically than many equivalent Pathfinder areas and transformational change is unlikely to involve widespread demolition; refurbishment, modernisation remodelling which retains housing is preferred. Equally, there should be more emphasis on social and economic issues as on physical fabric to improve image and reputation.
Bensham and Saltwell Neighbourhood Planning Supporting Document	2006	GVA Grimley	This report provides the strategic and local planning and regeneration context. It profiles existing and emerging provision of community and commercial infrastructure and services: retail, employment, education/childcare, health, community facilities.
Urban Design, Heritage and Character Report:	2006	GVA Grimley	This report evaluates the physical strengths weaknesses of the neighbourhood. It analyses what defines the neighbourhoods character by

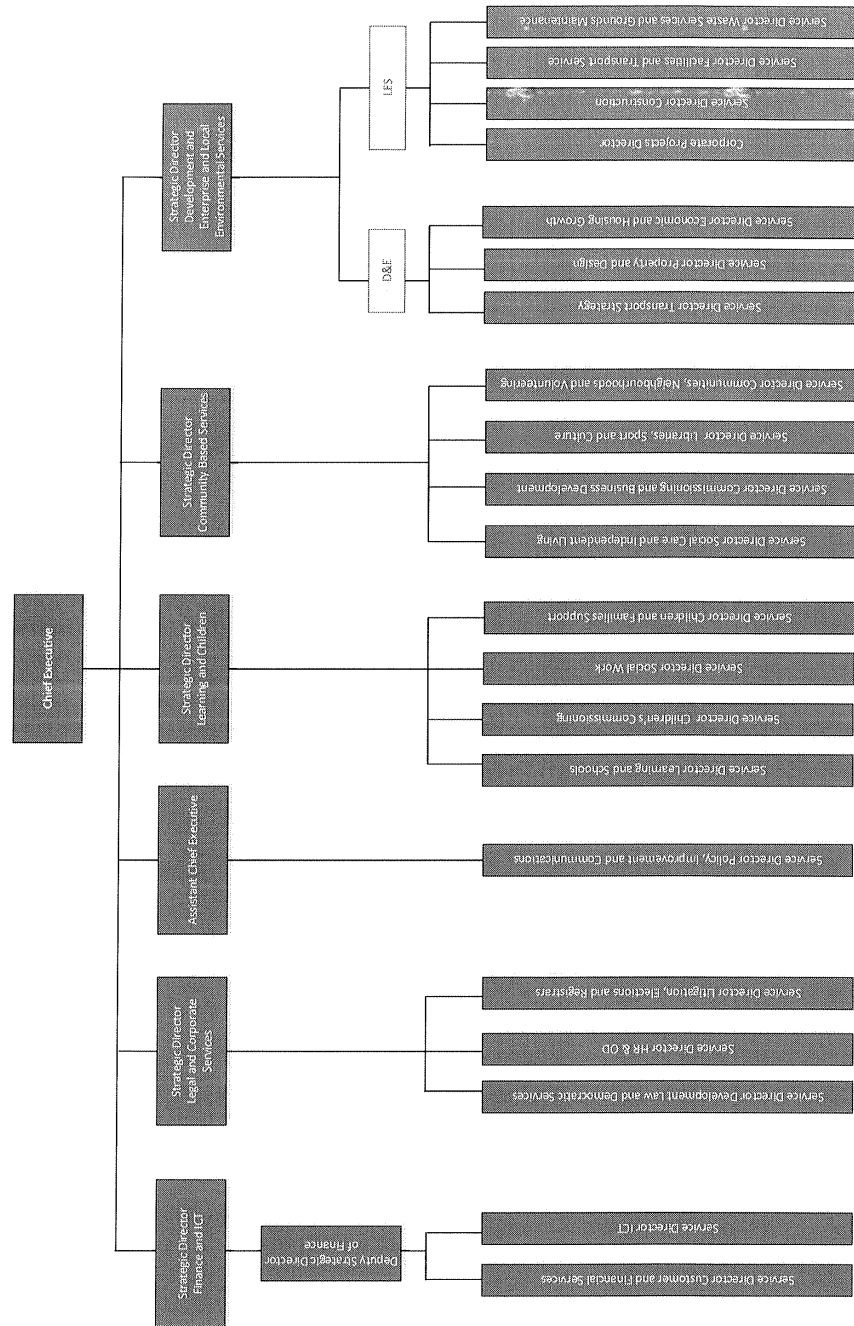
Bensham and Saltwell			looking at history, housing typology, character, community, visual condition, public realm and adaptability; providing a SWOT analysis. Importantly the visual assessment of this document informed which houses were to be demolished. The visual assessment consisted of a 'rapid assessment' of the visual condition of all housing. This document is informed by the Gateshead ULTA (above).
Bensham and Saltwell Executive Summary of Neighbourhood Action Plan	2006	GVA Grimley	Executive summary of the Neighbourhood Action Plan full detailed documents were not released into the public domain because it was too detailed and complex). It consists of distillations of Housing Market Analysis, Transport Analysis, Community Consultation Delivery Strategy.
'No Stranger to Change' DVD	2009	HT Media, (commission, by Gateshead Council)	This DVD was produced as part of the marketing HMR. Through historic and present footage and past and present residents it makes the case that the challenge is failure of the private housing market. It is a nostalgic account of neighbourhood, and as the title suggests accounts for other periods of change; clearance in 1960s and 1970s, claiming that 'positive community spirit of the past can be nurtured through regeneration.'
Neighbourhood Officer Team Reviews	2007 – 2012	Gateshead Council (Funded by BNG)	These documents are a professional newsletter, report on the progress of relocating residents and other improvement schemes.

Appendix D: Photographs from the theme organising exercise

Examples of different ways in which participants prioritised, organised and added themes in a exercise that supplemented formal interviews.



Appendix E: Structure of Gateshead Council



Appendix F: Summary of community consultation for HMR

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Neighbourhood Workshops: 155 people in total – 124 residents and 31 agencies attended workshops in four areas aimed at providing residents with the latest information and findings and started discussions on options for change
- Initial household surveys: two initial household surveys were carried out, one in the Avenues area of Bensham and Saltwell and one in Teams. This targeted areas where attendance at the workshops was low. Rate of return not specified.
- Outreach programme: in May 2005, 12 outreach sessions were carried out to reach those not attending formal meetings. Over 120 people were consulted, and additional 113 from the Jewish community based in Bensham and Saltwell.
- Schools programme: nine schools were involved in surveys of 183 Key Stage 2 pupils and seven head teachers.
- Community Drop-ins: in June 2005, eleven drop-ins sessions were organised to get responses to range of options. 764 people attended, with 403 questionnaires completed.
- Additional Household Surveys : following June drop-ins, three options were reduced to single draft proposal for consultation. The DRAFT Neighbourhood Action Plan included a number of areas in Bensham and Saltwell and Teams recommended for clearance and redevelopment. It was agreed that every resident within these designated areas should have the opportunity of completing a detailed questionnaire as well as attending the drop-ins. 100% coverage, door-to-door household survey was therefore arranged. A total of 246 door-to-door surveys were carried out.
- Final Series of drop ins: in September 2005; 1108 people in total attended twelve drop ins in all four areas, where comments on the on the Draft Neighbourhood Action Plan were requested through a questionnaire, 'sticky dot chart' and graffiti wall.
- Additional Comments: an exhibition was put on display in the Civic Centre for several weeks. Thirty additional comments were received.

Appendix G: Neighbourhood Officer Team Reviews

The Council's Neighbourhood Officers team received funding through the BNG and acted as a single point of contact for residents living within Gateshead's Bridging NewcastleGateshead (BNG) regeneration areas. Neighbourhood Officer Team Year Reviews were completed which provides information on their work and surveys which were carried out on people who had been displaced or 'decanted'. The findings in these three reports (Gateshead Council, 2007/2008; 2008/2009; 2009/2010) are summarised in the table below:

Year of Report	Summary of work in the area	People relocated	Response rate of survey	% Satisfied with advice and support received from the team
2007/08	Street Representative programme. Worked with Planning Aid North to carry out a training of residents on urban design.	59	83%	100%
2008/09	Continued support. Enabled 115 property acquisitions to proceed.	69	74%	96%
2009/10	Continued support. Enabled 92 property acquisitions liaising with landlords and owners. Works taken place on parks. Urban Design Reference panel continued.	68	79%	97%

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